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ABSTRACT

The proceedings of this conference reflect the theme of criteria for excellence in school reading programs. Contents of the volume include an introduction concerning excellence in education by Harry W. Sartain and a concluding statement presenting guidelines for development and assessment of an effective reading program by Rita M. Bean. Major speeches concerned criteria for good instructional objectives and symptoms of unhealthy objectives by William Eller; characteristics of the performance of good diagnostic-prescriptive teachers by Frank J. Guszak; behaviors of superior teachers in school reading programs by Ethna R. Reid; and features of criteria for excellence by Emma W. Rembert. Syntheses of group discussions which followed the major presentations are provided. Also included is an evaluation scale for school reading programs based on the Pennsylvania Right to Read Criteria for Excellence in Reading. (MKM)

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SCHOOL READING PROGRAMS:

CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE

edited by

Allen Berger and Rita Bean

Proceedings

of the 28th Language Communications Conference

Sponsored

by the Language Communications Faculty
Division of Teacher Development
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PREFACE

On the following pages you will find the four major speeches given at the 28th Language Communications Conference at the University of Pittsburgh. After the first three speeches, groups formed to discuss the ideas presented. We hope that you enjoy the contribution of Corinne Z. Piatt, a doctoral student who synthesized the notes of the recorders in the form that you find them in these *Proceedings*.

We also hope that you enjoy the introductory statement by Harry W. Sartain, Director of the Language Communications Faculty at the University of Pittsburgh and member of the International Reading Association's Board of Directors; and the concluding statement by Rita M. Bean, Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh. Their ideas in part reflect a one-credit course which they taught in conjunction with the two-day conference.

The 28th Language Communications Conference was a success because of the contributions of area educators. In addition to the group leaders and recorders and the language communications faculty, whose names are listed toward the end of these *Proceedings*, special recognition goes to Sandra Dolan, President of the Gerald A. Yoakam Reading Council; Horton Southworth and James Kelly Jr., respectively, Chairperson of the Division of Teacher Development and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh; and Wilhelmina E. Taylor of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

Harry W. Sartain
University of Pittsburgh

Any person having more mental competence than a moron knows the meaning of "time." But if asked to give a technical definition of time, even the most intellectual individuals are at some loss for words. Highly educated persons often find it more difficult to define common terms than others do, because they are fully aware of the complexities and the different points of view that may be involved.

Excellent education, like time, is recognized by most, but accurately described by very few. Those who know the field best are aware that educational excellence does not rest upon a single model. They know, too, that instructional practices which are very successful in the hands of one teacher may be much less successful in the hands of another. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to prove that any one procedure is essential in teaching, and it becomes hazardous to describe excellent education, even in general terms.

Still, some bits of objective evidence on good education have accumulated during the last fifty years, and subjective observations by competent professionals have added to that store of understanding. As a result, one can say with some conviction that excellence in education really is no mystery. It has, in fact, three necessary requirements: (1) a relevant curriculum that inspires active involvement of the learner, (2) a situation that encourages highly differentiated instruction, and (3) an excellent teacher in every classroom. The last is the most important because the other two cannot be effected otherwise.

Relevant Curriculum that Inspires Active Involvement

All people, including children, learn what they intend to learn and little else. Therefore if the curriculum experiences seem to have little relevance to the student's needs in everyday life, he learns only that small proportion which can be forced down his throat through various forms of regimentation and coercion.

The essence of the curriculum is the listing of education objectives, or outcomes, that are to be attained. In the field of reading the specification of educational outcomes in each of the following areas is essential:

1. Competence in sensory perception
2. Knowledge of vocabulary and language structure
3. Fluency in oral language
4. Word attack and recognition skills in written material
5. Tasks of literal and interpretive comprehension in factual reading
6. Tasks of obtaining and evaluating information from several sources
7. Skills of synthesizing information from several sources
8. Perception of enjoyable qualities in fiction
9. Perception of enjoyable qualities in poetry and drama
10. Adjustment of reading rate to purpose and materials

An excellent curriculum includes detailed objectives for all of the areas above in order not to shortchange the person who intends to become a mature reader. The weak curriculum too often omits most of the advanced objectives related to evaluative comprehension and literary appreciation, thereby leaving the graduate unable to cope with important problems of critical reading and unable to enjoy reading fully as a recreational activity.

Before education became compulsory, students could register dissatisfaction with any educational program by simply dropping out. Many decades of compulsory school attendance, however, coupled with the pressures for achievement placed on students by parents

in middle-class homes, have made teachers somewhat insensitive to the importance of providing curriculum objectives and experiences that fulfill the felt needs of the learners. Having no desire to learn much of what has been offered, millions of students from families that are culturally or economically atypical have dropped out of school mentally and emotionally long before they were permitted to drop out physically.

The excellent curriculum in reading involves students actively in learning by setting objectives whose relevance is readily apparent to the learners. Or it involves them in student-centered projects that utilize important communication skills in reaching goals that are pertinent to children at their current stages of development.

A Situation that Encourages Personalized, Differentiated Teaching

The interests, language aptitudes, and background experiences of children combine into as many unique patterns as there are students in any classroom. Therefore the presentation of the same instructional experiences to a whole room full of students at the same time has proven to be grossly inefficient. Whole-class teaching requires advanced students to waste endless hours waiting idly, while less advanced students or students with different experiential backgrounds are overwhelmed and made to feel unworthy because of impossible teacher expectations. It stifles student curiosity and forces the creative student to conform in thought and deed. And, worst of all, it makes the insecure individuals even less able to cope with the relationships in and outside of the school environment.

In order to rise above mediocrity, every school program must provide for personalized, differentiated teaching. These are some of the requirements that make adequate differentiation possible:

1. Diagnostic instruments suitable for use in classrooms
2. Developmental and corrective instructional materials at all instructional levels represented by the students and in all phases of the reading language curriculum
3. Instructional materials that relate to the different interests and cultural backgrounds of the students
4. A system of school and classroom organization that enables teachers to know each child personally and to have enough time for thorough instruction, probably in small, flexible groups. (This usually means some form of modified self-contained or nongraded plan at early levels, and a nongraded or small "pod" teaming arrangement at later levels. Homogeneous sectioning and extensive departmentalization have long been practiced and have tended to impede adequate personalization[5].)
5. Reasonable class sizes -- 15 to 25 students.[4] (Dozens of very poorly done research studies have been quoted for years to refute the relationship between class size and achievement. A more careful analysis of the studies shows, however, that class size does make a difference when the teaching is excellent. Class size makes no difference only when the teaching is uniformly mediocre![3])

The Excellent Teacher

Research has shown that without doubt some teachers are more effective in producing learning than others.[2] But it provides only glimmers of light concerning what the most effective teachers do in comparison with what less effective teachers do.

Still, the majority of children can tell with reasonable certainty which of their teachers are most competent. And the parents are almost equally well informed about the classes in which their children are learning successfully. Therefore it seems particularly appropriate to consider the findings from a study in which students described their best teachers.

After considering experiences with their elementary, secondary, and college teachers, two hundred college sophomores indicated these were the nine top traits of their "great" teachers, with proportions of response as indicated:[1]

1.	Has a personal interest in his students	72%
2.	Conducts an interesting class	53%
3.	Motivates through his/her own enthusiasm	44%
4.	Has a good sense of humor	35%
5.	Knows his/her subject well	34%
6.	Commands and gives respect	30%
7.	Shows a love of teaching	29%
8.	Holds students to high standards	27%
9.	Has good general intelligence	27%

On the basis of this and other observations it seems safe to say that the excellent teacher:

1. Has an adequate knowledge of the field that he/she teaches
2. Is vitally concerned about the students and their learning
3. Organizes the classroom and the learning experience effectively
4. Stimulates each student to progress beyond his/her current level
5. Provides for individual differences in backgrounds and progress
6. Is comfortable with himself/herself and others
7. Enjoys teaching and teaches vigorously

Developing Criteria for Excellence

The following papers from the conference on Criteria for Excellence in School Reading Programs provide detailed information on selected aspects of excellence in reading instruction. The extensive checklist entitled "Criteria for Excellence in Reading: An Evaluation Scale"[6] also is included. The ideas from the paper and from the long checklist need to be combined into a new, somewhat shorter, and more useable list for use in evaluating reading programs in Pennsylvania.

This new set of evaluative criteria will further reflect the importance of (1) a relevant curriculum that inspires active involvement of the learner, (2) a situation that encourages highly differentiated instruction, and (3) an excellent teacher in every classroom.

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INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

William Eller
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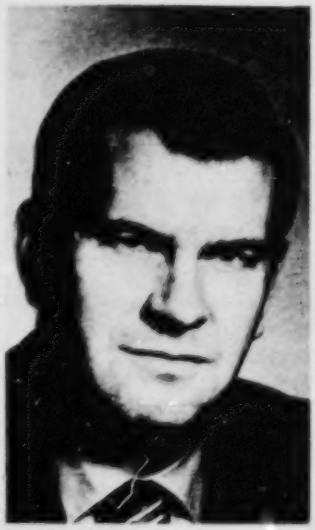
Rationale for Goals and Objectives



Instructional objectives, excellent or otherwise, are viewed by many teachers and other curriculum builders as a somewhat-necessary-but-not-very-pleasant adjunct to the more satisfying procedures involved with teaching children. No doubt there are reasons for the not-very-positive feelings which some of us hold -- or have held -- toward educational goals and objectives. Some of us probably retain a mild aversion to the consideration of objectives which we acquired when we were in a teacher eduation program. Yet so many respectable educational sources accord respect to instructional objectives that it is nearly impossible to dismiss the concept as unworthy, or unimportant. Perhaps instructional objectives, at the present anyway, are in a category somewhat like that of classical music, which some wag has defined as "music which is better than it sounds."

It may very well be that instructional objectives have not enjoyed a very good "press" over the past few decades, partly because of matters of form. That is, educators' perceptions of objectives may be influenced too much by notions that objectives must be stated in one or more somewhat restrictively defined styles, and by the correlated notion that a statement of instructional intentions which does not conform is not really an objective. Perhaps some of the observations which will be presented later will dispel certain of the misconceptions about strict form and structure.

Certainly almost all human activity has some identifiable goals and objectives, even though it is often true that the objectives are not stated, and even though it is equally true that the person engaged in the activity is not conscious of his objectives, although most of the time he could answer the questions, "What are you doing that for?" It would even be safe to argue that a person engaged in a seemingly aimless task such as whittling could identify an objective for that activity; it might, be "I'm just whiling away the time until the mailman arrives."

The whittler's response leads to a basic principle regarding the stating of instructional objectives: they can often be expressed in less formal language than that which is usually employed in writing educational objectives. An example might be: "Each child will be able to give one or more reasons for any of his choices of free reading materials."

Another principle which may help to "loosen up" the stereotyped thinking about instructional objectives is: Objectives may be -- and sometimes are -- stated or written after a given lesson or a large curriculum segment has been developed. Not long ago I was involved with about a dozen other educators in a sizable program to develop instructional materials in a certain field of elementary education. At one point I suggested, with some uncertainty, that the group might develop the objectives after the program had been at least partially completed. I thought that I might be "shot down" by some other members of the group for making such a proposal, but the group member most sophisticated in matters of instruc-

tional objectives supported the suggestion. He pointed out that experienced teachers have internalized sets of goals and objectives, as well as some sense of scope and sequence. Therefore, when experienced workers develop a program, a set of instructional materials, they are giving expression to instructional objectives which have been a part of themselves for quite some time, even though these objectives -- or at least, some of them -- may never have been stated in printed or spoken word.

Of course, if objectives are to have the desired effect upon the quality and content of instruction, they usually need to be identified and considered in advance of the teaching. But Dolores Durkin has posed a sort of generalized review that enables a teacher to at least monitor the situation during the school day. She has argued that if teachers were going to ask themselves one question during their work with the youngsters, it should be, "Why am I doing what I'm doing?" Durkin even goes so far as to propose that the questions should be asked about once during every hour of the school day. Durkin's question might strike some professional educators as a bit breezy, but it reminds me of a woman who was a Master's degree advisee of mine. For several years before she began the Master's program, this woman had been known to me as a superb first grade teacher -- about as effective as any primary teacher in my total range of acquaintances. She included hundreds of very productive activities in her work with pupils, but she also injected a few items which were just "cute"; that is, they probably looked like clever teaching devices to visiting parents, but they didn't have any identifiable benefit for the learners. I would guess that the only change I might have made in that teacher's procedures is that I induced her to ask herself a variation of Durkin's question every so often: "How will this activity lead to some sort of development in the children?" Frankly, that's the only change I ever really tried to make in that excellent teacher, so I have gained some satisfaction from her occasional reports that she has continued to ask herself that question, and has abandoned certain "gimmicky" procedures when, in her judgment, they failed to meet the criterion.

Review of Some Fundamentals About Goals and Objectives

Anyone who has studied curriculum materials in recent years knows that generally the term "goals" is used to describe the broader aims of an educational program. The goals do not change from day to day; it is their very constancy which enables them to serve as the foundation from which the objectives for a single lesson can develop. An example of an instructional goal in reading for primary age youngsters would be something like, "The pupils will expand their sight vocabularies as they continue to read more widely." An instructional objective related to that goal, but specific to a certain lesson might be: "The children will be able to read the following words both in context and in isolation: berry, bottom, escape, fact, etc.

A few paragraphs back there was presented the suggestion that some of the tendency for teachers to be "turned off" regarding objectives may stem from the highly prescribed formats in which they have been presented and taught to teachers. In this regard, it might be profitable to re-examine Robert Mager's widely used pattern for instructional objectives, and then to consider breaking away from that pattern somewhat.

Mager gave us the model in which an educational objective had three terms: (1) the conditions under which the prescribed behavior would occur, (2) a description of the behavior itself, and (3) the level of performance that would be regarded as indicative of attainment of the objective. An example, would be:

> Given a set of printed directions (condition) each learner will state the sequence of steps in the directions (observable behavior) with seventy-five per cent of the steps in the correct order (level of performance).

If instructional objectives always had to be as precise and structured as the example above, many of us would probably continue to regard them as of somewhat limited value, or to remain "turned off" by them. Happily, some latitude is both permissible and helpful. In the matter of the conditions (item 1 above), not so much precision is necessary at times, and a more general condition will suffice. For example, the phrase "Given printed matter of suitable difficulty and with the reading purpose identified," could be substituted for the condition in the example, and then the objective would fit a number of reading situations.

The performance level of an instructional objective can also often be considerably more flexible than in the example. For many objectives in reading instruction, it may be suitable to accept an accurate response from the child as meeting the performance criterion, since it is not feasible to try to determine the portion of trials in which the child would score positively. Then, too, there are objectives for which the desired behavior is simply an increase of a certain behavior; that is, the learner engages in a certain procedure more often than before. Also, there are various reading objectives in which the behavior is creative, and in these situations any suitable response is considered acceptable, so the performance level often is not even stated; any reasonable answer by the child satisfies the performance level criterion. An example of such an objective would be:

> "Given the story as read, each child will create conversation of the characters that will extend the ending of the story."

While the condition and the performance level of the Magerian model can be made considerably more general in many reading objectives, the description of the behavior needs to remain rather specific. It is not often that there is a reduction in the necessity for the desired behavior to be described in precise terms, usually rather plain verbs such as state, list, identify, name, etc. The important quality of this middle term of an objective is its observability; that is, can the teacher look at the child and tell whether he is engaged in the behavior, or can she examine some product of his effort and determine if he *was* engaged in that behavior.

Criteria of Good Instructional Objectives

In keeping with the theme of Criteria for Excellence, it may be appropriate next to consider some qualities of good instructional objectives, in terms of both their statement and their implementation. Later, some negative criteria will also be listed. Excellent instructional objectives for reading teaching would include most of the following qualities:

1. **Directionality.** Such objectives are designed to lead the learner from where he is to where he is capable of being.
2. **Attainability.** There is a good prospect that such an objective can be achieved by the instructional program -- something can be done about it.
3. **Operationalistic.** The behavior is sufficiently well defined so that it can be observed with considerable precision and judgments regarding its attainment are easily made.
4. **Completeness.** While this virtue cannot be expected of each single objective, the instructional objectives for a unit or a program should include affective as well as cognitive elements.

   In this era, when educational psychology is definitely slanted toward the cognitive, there is a considerable inclination for objective-writers to slight the affective aspects of a child's development. Further, almost anyone who has endeavored to write objectives has realized that it is usually easier to write instructional objectives in a cognitive vein; thus, the difficulty of stating the affectively-oriented objectives is another cause of their occasional neglect.

More than a few reading specialists are dismayed nowadays by the overemphasis on cognitive goals, objectives and teaching procedures. They are bothered by reading curricula which seem to imply that the curriculum builders believe that reading is almost entirely an assemblage of minor and major skills into some sort of composite of skills. These uneasy reading educators are themselves aware that reading power is a good deal more than the sum of a great number of small components.

Interestingly, the most successful remedial teacher I have ever known -- now a Pittsburgh resident -- approaches her pupils mainly in terms of their affective needs rather than their precise skill deficiencies. Her instructional patterns over the fifteen or sixteen years that I have interacted with her have been based heavily on children's interests and curiosities. Her initial goal with each new remedial case seems to be to find an answer to this question: "What topics intrigue this youngster so much that he would be eager to read about them?" Of course, this fine teacher realizes that for some seriously disabled readers the early remedial instruction will need to avoid reading materials that resemble anything he has used in the classrooms where he has strong recollections of failure. By focusing so much on the child's affective needs, this teacher, who deals mostly with what I might call "desperation cases," has achieved a phenomenal record of successes.

5. **Variable specificity.** Not all objectives need to be highly specific. Objectives should be no more precise than necessary. If excessively specific, they are too highly focused, and thus too narrow to be maximally useful.
6. **Teacher involvement.** The staff which does the instructing must have not only the right but the responsibility to be involved in the determination of objectives.
7. **Variability according to teachers and learners.** Objectives should be different for different teachers and for different pupils.
8. **Negatively selective.** Instructional objectives should lead to decisions about what not to teach -- things already known to the child -- as well as to what to teach.

Symptoms of Unhealthy Instructional Objectives

Just as it is possible to list certain criteria which guide toward excellence in the writing and carrying out of instructional objectives, there are negative features which may be observed in the stating and implementing of objectives. When more than a few of the following qualities are present, the instructional objectives are not doing much for the reading program:

1. **Objectives externally acquired.** Every so often we hear a reading consultant or a building principal boast that his or her school has a total of more than 1,500 instructional objectives for reading which they assembled from three different sources. The boaster fails to realize two things about these mail order objectives: (1) there is a great deal of overlap among the 1500-plus objectives, since many of them from one source will be similar to those from either of the other two sources; (2) a collection of 300 locally-generated instructional objectives would likely serve the needs of the children and teachers much better than 1500 from remote agencies.
2. **Excessive objectives.** Sometimes a great number of objectives are listed for the teaching of a single lesson, whereas a teacher should not be expected to be guided by more than seven or eight objectives on any one lesson. In any case, he should not be expected to have more than that many in mind at any one time.

3. **Indecision among objective writers.** Sometimes a group of objective writers do not seem to know what they hope to achieve. At other times their apparent indecision stems from their tendency to become enmeshed in the mechanics of objective-writing. In either case, the group, after completing a portion of the work, may not be able to decide whether what they have written is really a set of objectives.
4. **Evaluation limited to converted objectives.** If an objective is viable, there should be several ways of evaluating its attainment. If there is a one-to-one relationship between several test items and the objectives on which they were based, something is wrong. Quite possibly teachers are being encouraged -- not necessarily overtly -- to teach to the test questions.
5. **Unrealistic performance levels.** Occasionally instructional objectives are prepared with criterion levels which do not reflect awareness of the development of children. When levels of performance are being established, they must incorporate knowledge of what children are able to perform at relevant developmental stages. It might be ironic, though accurate, to state that criterion levels must be based on normative information.
6. **Insistence upon mastery.** While there are instructional elements which should be mastered sooner or later, mastery is not imperative in all learning situations.
7. **Insistence upon a hierarchy.** To insist upon a hierarchy in the learning of the reading skills is to imply that certain skills must be learned before other skills can be approached successfully by learners. While there are reading program components that almost any teacher would agree to teach before certain other elements, the assumption of a hierarchical order of skills is often unwarranted.
8. **Administrative involvement with details of objectives.** Sometimes members of a Board of Education are familiar with the details of the educational objectives for the reading program, and may even take some pride in this knowledge. However, the Board members could more profitably concern themselves with the goals of reading instruction, since the details of objectives should vary from classroom to classroom.
9. **Neglect of broad goals.** Occasionally a situation is observed in which the children perform well on instructional objectives but not in achievement of the broad goals of the reading program. An example occurs when the children have learned phonic skills thoroughly in word attack lessons, but these same children are not attacking words effectively when they encounter them in realistic prose reading apart from the reading instruction.
10. **Teaching to objectives regardless of pupil needs.** Related to item nine above as well as to number eight of the criteria for good objectives (negatively selective) is the situation in which a child is actually achieving a major goal of the reading program, but is still being subjected to instruction based on objectives designed to achieve that goal. An example: Last May the seven-year-old daughter of one of my colleagues was reading at a general 4.1 level as she neared the end of her experience in grade two. Yet, in a conference with the parents, the teacher expressed some concern over the child's lack of mastery of the vowel sounds of the letter A. In this instance the child's reading growth had more or less transcended her need for certain minutiae of phonics, but her teacher, "not seeing the forest for the trees," was still concerned about a specific detail among the array of instructional objectives.
11. **Learner over-attention to detail.** In this era of heavy commitment to the cognitive processes of learning, it is understandable that the children themselves sometimes

perceive of reading as the mastery of an assortment of specific "small" skills rather than as a global process.

12. **Narrow view of curriculum.** There are occasions when a curriculum committee -- or an individual teacher -- has developed a list of objectives which are accepted as a curriculum in reading. An array of performance objectives, no matter how complete, is not a reading program.

Summary Comments

When you observe a good teacher at work with young learners, you can more or less "extract" the objectives of the lesson, even if the teacher is not conscious of them. Sometimes the listed objectives -- even those listed only mentally -- do not relate highly to the cognitive and affective impact of the lesson; that is, the children may not be learning what the objectives call for, or they may be learning things beyond, apart from, or even contrary to the stated or assumed objectives. We have a Master's degree-level reading methods course at SUNY-Buffalo which is taught in an elementary school in the area, so that the graduate students can work with pupils and teachers as part of the course. One of the assignments calls for our students to observe a reading lesson for which they do not know the objectives. Their goal is to figure out what cognitive and/or affective changes are occurring in the pupils as a result of the lesson. One of the virtues of such an assignment is that it helps the graduate students to become aware of what might be called "the hidden agenda"; and the hidden agenda may include this: that some children are learning to dislike reading at the same time that they are learning to read.

As anyone would expect, some educators who write good objectives do not teach well enough for the objectives to be discernible. And the reverse can also be observed. As stated earlier I've been involved in the production of an extensive program of developmental reading materials, a program which has involved in-put from twelve authors. Everyone of the twelve was known to be a skilled teacher of reading before he or she joined the project, but some of these super teachers have had a difficult time learning to *state* their objectives. However, their objectives are easy to determine from observation of their teaching or from scrutiny of the materials they've developed.

Since objectives are an uncertain element in today's pedagogy, there is some danger that a teacher who has just had a course in reading or objective-writing might forget to teach the kids instead of the objectives. He or she may even say "I teach Ginn 360" or "I teach ITA" or "I'm teaching the objectives for dictionary skills."

Anyone who believes that teaching to criterion level on various objectives is what it's all about isn't getting the job done. A child can perform to criterion on exercises today, but a week from today he or she might not utilize the skill in a functional reading situation. This sort of breakdown is sometimes observable in the area of word attack skills. The child seems to learn the various decoding skills and can demonstrate them adequately when attention is given to them; that is, when he is aware that the lesson is on some aspect of decoding. But some days later, when the decoding ability would be helpful in a realistic reading situation, that ability does not come into play.

Early in this discourse, one of Dolores Durkin's guidelines was cited. Perhaps it would be useful to end with Roger Farr's "ultimate criterion" for planning, teaching, evaluating a reading lesson or procedure: "Will this activity or experience help to make reading make sense in the lives of the children?" If that question can be answered "yes" the teacher should move ahead, and not worry about the precise nature or wording of the instructional objectives.

SYNTHESIS OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS AFTER ADDRESS ON INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Corinne Piatt

Groups were unanimous in their reactions to Dr. Eller's treatment of behavioral objectives as realistic in statement and application. Each group, however, focused on that aspect of using or writing behavioral objectives that had particular significance for them. Views concerning the goals and objectives of remedial instruction were treated by the reading specialists. One does not have to be "smart" to learn to read, for reading is a skill that can be learned by most people regardless of intelligence. What differs is the degree of application and interpretation by the reader.

Good remedial instruction for disabled readers should result in three times the gains that those same children would make in regular classroom instruction.

The material should become increasingly difficult if effective instruction is being carried out and if valid objectives are established and met. Children in good remedial programs gain in a way that is not necessarily related to intelligence. Some make several years' gain while others make very little progress at all. Those who do not make gains need further thoughtful disability analysis.

Dr. Eller's statement that children often see reading as sets of specific skills and reading exercises provoked a great deal of discussion. Connected reading is a complex act. Reading to follow directions, to gather information, or to follow an exciting sequence of events is a complex endeavor. To know the names of letters, to discriminate phonemes, or to know the meanings of words are "simplistics." We need to determine if our objectives are directed to the complex act of reading or are bound up in the simplistics of phonics and word analysis. A child reads the way we teach him to read. If instruction emphasized simplistics, the child will be denied the art of complex reading.

The specialist's or clinician's view of diagnosis affects the objectives for instruction. If instruction is based on the observation and definition of simplistics, instructional objectives will be directed toward simplistics. Contrary to past practice, an oral inventory (informal reading inventory) should use the sentence rather than the word as a unit for diagnosing strengths and needs. Reading specialists and the teachers they train need to stop looking at children's oral reading errors as single-word errors and analyze them in "miscue" fashion. Those who do so will be tuned in to the complex act of reading and will be in the "frontier of reading instruction."

Reading specialists and classroom teachers expressed concern for the use of "canned" programs and objectives which pace the children through reading materials with little intervention from the teacher. Children are made to go through all of the lessons to make sure they have all of the skills which are taught by the materials. The rigid structure of the canned programs reduces the teacher to a dispenser of materials that drain pupil interest and neglect the affective aspect of reading instruction.

The continued practice of providing phonics instruction for fluent readers serves as an indication of the specialists' need to re-examine the goals of reading instruction. And if we are to re-examine the goals of instruction, it follows that teachers of reading and reading specialists must know what is involved in the reading process. A teacher may know all that there is to know about the writing of instructional objectives, but if he knows little about the sequencing of skills, instruction may be ineffective.

The early childhood groups concurred with Dr. Eller's view that goals should be relevant to the abilities of children and should be attainable in the classroom. The simple question, "Why am I doing what I am doing?" can help teachers clarify objectives and choose activities that are appropriate for young learners.

Early childhood teachers were cautioned about borrowing activities which are "cute" but not pertinent to the development of young children. Teachers should have confidence in their own judgment in the selection of objectives and procedures for instructing young children. Many of the objectives for early learning have long-term effects.

The education of young children is enhanced if parents have some sense of what happens to their children in school. Teachers might establish rapport with parents in order to avoid giving young children "double messages" about their schooling. If teachers effectively communicate classroom goals and methodology to parents, input to the children from home and school can be consistent and reinforcing rather than conflicting and confusing. Parents can be more actively involved in their own children's education.

Discussion revealed that early childhood education appears to lack a common philosophical and theoretical base. Some teachers expressed the view that, with each teacher following his own inclination, the concept of early childhood education may be destined to failure. Others countered this point of view by stressing the need for an individualized approach in early childhood instruction. Individualization requires an eclectic methodology carefully defined by those with knowledge of the tenets of several organized schools of thought concerning the education and development of children. Whatever approach is taken, it should be based upon what we know about child growth and development and sound learning theory, and be further defined by long-term and short-term objectives which meet the criteria set forth by Dr. Eller.

While some teachers felt that the writing of objectives has been overdone, others indicated that having to write concisely-stated objectives caused them to evaluate their methodology more strenuously than they might have done if precise objectives had not been required. The concensus was that student teachers and beginning teachers should be required to write explicit objectives. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, are able to function effectively with less precisely stated objectives for they have internalized the presentation, sequence, and evaluation of the concepts and skills which they teach.

Not often stated in instructional objectives but equally important to students' achievement is teacher expectation. The key to motivating children lies in sharing the responsibility for goal-setting with the learners. It is particularly important that a student know (1) why he is working at a particular task, (2) what he is expected to learn, and (3) how it fits into the Gestalt or total reading process.

Participants also looked at objectives from a legalistic point of view. Behavioral objectives can be dangerous; parents might sue if objectives are not met. Teachers, too, might sue or condemn the system that does not provide in-service training for meeting predetermined objectives in which teachers have had no input. Thus, we need to know the legal implications of declaring our educational intent through written behavioral objectives, and teachers need training in school law. Performance contracting is one example of how insistance upon performance objectives and accountability might affect teachers.

The persons in teacher preparation approached the topic of behavioral objectives in terms of the growing number of competency-based programs at the university level. They expressed concern that competency-based programs may constrain teacher preparation by isolating too-specific behaviors in the quest for demonstrated competence. Participants wanted to know if competency-based programs will eventually be mandated for teacher training.

Dr. Eller presented a realistic view of writing behavioral objectives that removes much of the restriction which we have felt in the past. In his presentation, he alluded to the neglect of affective objectives which are not as readily observed as are those in the cognitive and psychomotor domains. An effective program of instruction balances cognitive objectives with objectives from the affective domain.The consensus was that written objectives are important and necessary, with the degree of specificity dependent upon the experience of the teacher and the nature of the instruction.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE

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When the massive *First Grade Reading Programs Study* (Bond and Dykstra, 1967) failed to support any one method of reading instruction as "the method," the by-products of the study were examined. The most noteworthy observation revealed that while there was no single method that seemed to produce consistent results, there were teachers across the various programs who seemed to have unusually good results. These teachers, who were subsequently dubbed "diagnostic" teachers, seemed to prosper in any kind of program. Not only did the teachers work effectively with any type of reading program, they also achieved results in the so-called "disadvantaged" areas where most other teachers were not successful.

Presumably with the knowledge that such "diagnostic teachers" did exist, it would be a simple matter to look at these people and examine what they did so that we could train the others to do similarly. Unfortunately, that logic failed to work because it was discovered that the teachers were so vastly different that it was impossible to generate a model of a "diagnostic teacher" from the composite of these people.

What the "diagnostic teacher" concept did accomplish was to reveal to the world the already suspected idea that the "teacher is the critical variable that can make a difference in a child's reading." That is, the teacher can make things happen when they don't normally happen because of the absence of other crucial variables, e.g. reading in the home, etc. It also set a number of researchers out on the path of trying to determine to what extent diagnostic teachers could be produced by training programs.

A Diagnostic -- Prescriptive Teacher Concept

Very soon after the First Grade Studies (Bond and Dykstra, 1967), we set about the task of building diagnostic-prescriptive reading teachers. The assumptions upon which we have constructed our model specify the following criteria for the diagnostic-prescriptive reading teacher:

1. Possesses a knowledge of the reading skills and their general sequence.

Mager (1962) suggests that many educators "are aiming at nothing and hitting it most of the time." Perhaps, such an indictment would apply to many reading instructional efforts that proceed without any clear goals of reading behavior.

Because reading skills are identifiable goals, it seems imperative that diagnostic teachers possess clear understandings of these behaviors and the relative timing of their appearance. It seems imperative that the kindergarten teacher must have some knowledge of higher level reading skills if she is to make provisions for children who enter kindergarten as readers. Conversely, a junior high or high school teacher must often deal with beginning readers. Without a knowledge of beginning reading skills, these latter teachers are severely handicapped in helping these children with great needs.

Certain reading authorities deny the existence of any describable sequence of reading skills. Such a notion appears nonsense to any observer of beginning reading who notes

specific patterns of acquisition. While there is obvious truth in the idea that many so-called reading skills lists are very artificial constructs of the reading process, there is also obvious evidence regarding the acquisition of reading skill (Cohen, 1975).

2. Realizes that the children in his/her classroom vary widely in their abilities to read and to learn.

While most of us readily accept the idea that few of us look alike, weigh the same, or possess the same interests, there is a continuation of the widespread notion that we all learn alike. Consequently, we see most children in a grade expected to function from the same reader, speller, math text, etc. Presumably, the children listen to the teacher and march in unison through the learning process.

Obviously, it doesn't work this way as we note that children arrive at school with very different types of backgrounds and learning rates. Still, demands are made to teach them all the same and to apply the same pacing rates.

It is critical for the "diagnostic teacher" to realize that the children will arrive at different levels and will learn at different levels. Such a realization and appreciation is necessary if the teacher is to employ the subsequent steps which result in unique programming for unique individual needs. It seems important to stress this because there are many programs in reading that are supposed to be administered to the class in toto. The face validity of such a claim is so obviously false that it seems strange that people (especially teachers) can buy the idea that all children's needs can be met by the same instruction to all children.

3. Operates a program that is characterized by continuous, informal diagnosis of individual student attainments of the various reading skills.

Knowing skills sequences and accepting that children have reached differing levels of attainment is not enough. The teacher must be able to determine accurately where each child stands on the reading skills continuum if she is to program effectively.

The process of diagnosis, to be effective, must be continuous. To be continuous, it must be primarily informal (performed on the spot by the teacher who observes and notes specific behaviors or their absence). It seems to us unrealistic that most formal, standardized testing formats can offer the diagnostic teacher very much information for the ongoing process of instruction.

The most crucial measurement, insofar as we are concerned, is the informal reading inventory concept as developed initially by Betts (1946) and refined by others (Powell, 1968, 1974). We feel that the concept is particularly crucial for early readers who must receive correctly timed inputs into their reading development. While many doubt the validity of the concept of an "independent" and "instructional" reading level, we continually observe the reality of such by observing the progress of pupils who are correctly placed as opposed to those who are struggling daily with high difficulty materials. In many instances, we observe that the simple replacement task, followed by extensive reading practice, can correct many so-called reading problem cases.

Of primary concern to us as we observe readers in action is their use of the context for the determination of words and meanings. Consequently, we are closely attuned to note pupils who fail to look beyond difficult words for meaning, pupils who constantly look up to the teacher to give them "unknown" words, and other behaviors that reveal an absence of contextual analysis skills.

When contextual analysis will not permit the unlocking of words, we observe to see whether the pupil possesses skills which will permit him to unlock its particular structures (words in compound, root words, affixes, syllables, endings). Depending upon what the child does in terms of breaking these things down, we determine his needs.

4. Prescribes individual programs for individual students based upon the assessment of the most needed skills.

Diagnosis without prescription is obviously insufficient, so we are keenly aware of the need to develop appropriate learning tasks that will produce the desired reading skills. This means that we must assist teachers in the development of specific tasks for specific word recognition and *comprehension needs.*

Pupils just entering the reading process are taught to read kernel sentence patterns that feature tight controls. Through the processes of modeling, substituting, framing, matching, and closing, pupils are taught to read whole words in controlled sentences.

Prediction is featured by developing reading patterns that cause pupils to use pictorial, syntactic, and semantic cues in an effort to reduce uncertainty. We make what we call "Cloze Readers" where pupils read and predict covered up words by their surroundings.

While the reading of whole sentence patterns is being developed, pupils are initiated into a structural analysis supporting system that is designed to complement their emerging reading skills. Included in this structural support system is the dimension sometimes referred to as "phonics". To us, phonics is taught inductively through a substitutive process, pupils learn no rules or descriptors (e.g. long vowels, short vowels). Rather, children learn to perform initial, final, and medial substitutions that will eventually heighten their recognition of unfamiliar word structures.

Comprehension tasks involving prediction, location, memory, organization, and evaluation are solicited from the pre-reading level on through each increasing stage of difficult material.

Each pupil has an individual profile sheet in order that the teacher may note needs and attainments in his reading development.

5. Provides a program that reveals skills instruction tailored to individual needs.

The inevitable result of the above programming is individualized instruction. There can be no "diagnostic teacher" without the realization of individualization.

The problem does not seem to be that people reject the idea that children's needs are quite different (and that they need different programs) but in the realization of how you go about individualizing a large number of students. Many say quite simply that "It can't be done."

We feel and offer evidence in terms of ongoing projects that "it can be done." To be done, though, requires high degree of development in terms of organization and management. Much effort is currently directed toward these concerns as seen by such programs as the Wisconsin Design for Reading Improvement, Systematic Approach to Reading Instruction, The Fountain Valley Reading Support System, and others.

Our efforts in these directions have been focused upon the development of the following:

A compact set of behavioral objectives

A compact means for recording pupil skills needs

A systematized means of directing pupils to needed skills materials

A specific set of instructional procedures for dealing with different types of skills needs

A time management system that assists the teacher in planning how to organize her time toward the greatest pupil benefit

A contract system that permits pupils to work effectively on their own toward the development of basic skills needs.

Programming Developments

Our "diagnostic-prescriptive teacher" model was initiated through the undergraduate program at the University of Texas at Austin. Eight years ago we realized that the lecture course on reading methods just wasn't getting the job done. Noting the need to teach children, we brought children into the university classroom, scooted the chairs against the wall, and began to have our classes focused upon the teaching of children in an open space situation. The description of the development of this program is chronicled in the literature (Guszak, 1971; Guszak, 1969; Guszak, 1973; Serlin, 1970).

Currently, we are seeing our graduates developing diagnostic-prescriptive programs in all grade levels in many schools. Their efforts have been instrumental in causing numerous school districts to seek specifically graduates of our program.

As pleasing as the development of preservice teachers has been, we have realized that such is not enough. With declining job opportunities and birth rates, it has been critical to reach more and more in-service teachers. Consequently, we have been turning increasingly to in-service teacher-training efforts.

Two of the most intensive efforts have been in Saint Martin Parish (Louisiana) Follow Through Project and the Eagle Pass Independent School District Project (Texas). In both of these experiences we have established continuing in-service training programs. In both places we are seeing outstanding achievement, not previously noted (St. Martin Follow Through, 1974, 1975; Eagle Pass Reading Evaluation, 1974, 1975). In Saint Martin's the First Grade group has achieved national normative scores and has surpassed the higher socio-economic students. In Eagle Pass, at midsemester of the First Grade, the children had made twice the achievement of the preceding year's First Graders (in one half the time). Such efforts are resulting in increased calls for the development of diagnostic-prescriptive teacher-training programs in other places.

Currently, our programming effort matches pre-service and in-service training in the Brooke Elementary School in Austin, Texas. At Brooke we train three groups of undergraduates (first semester, second semester, and student teachers) in a program where all the teachers are operating our program model. Brooke's achievement gains are documented (Garza, 197[illegible]).

Program Description

The basis of the programming effort is contained in the text *Diagnostic Reading Instruction in the Elementary School* (Harper and Row, 1972). Further detail and development is contained in the *Reading Checklist Teacher's Manual* (Services In Education, 1975). Some of the latest developments in contracting and subsystems are contained in the latter publication.

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SYNTHESIS OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS AFTER ADDRESS ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Corinne Piatt

The discussion among reading specialists following Dr. Guszak's presentation addressed (1) problems of teaching disabled or reluctant readers, (2) the place of oral language in reading, and (3) the role of the reading specialist. Reading involves decision-making and the use of cognitive resources. Cues within words and context provide the basis for prediction and decision.

The need for alternative strategies for teaching reading skills and the efficacy of totally individualizing reading instruction were treated. Many aspects of reading can be efficiently taught to a group of students. What needs to be individualized is the practice and application of the skills.

If children are to learn to read, they must be given regularized, systemized instruction. In extreme disability cases, instruction can be extended to the home with instruction provided for parents who are willing and able to work with their own offspring.

Regression, as treated by Dr. Guszak, is expected to some extent, but frequent regression is indicative of reading problems and the need for analysis. Children in special reading services often lose the gains which they have made in reading performance. Some specialists and classroom teachers expressed the belief that students are not able to adapt to group reading instruction after having had intensive individual instruction. Another view suggested that classroom teachers might not know how to maintain and further the gains that had been made in special or clinical reading instruction.

The problem of what to do for the child who demonstrates proficiency in all of the phonics skills and has both visual and auditory perceptual acuity but reads poorly was discussed. Does the problem lie in the definition of reading skills rather than in the performance of the student? While there are some skills that logically precede or follow other skills in reading, there is no really hard and fast hierarchy of reading skills any more than there is one way to teach reading.

Reading comprehension can be enhanced through the use of context clues. Cues within words and context provide the basis for prediction in reading in the content areas as well. The context helps the child understand what he reads because it brings meaning to the reader. Using context clues provides meaning, makes sense, is the basis for prediction, and facilitates comprehension.

One group leader discussed a framework for teaching reading which fits various approaches. The components are *model, pattern, substitute, cloze,* and *compose.* The neurological impress technique is a modeling strategy. The language experience approach involves composition and can be turned into a modeling strategy, a patterning strategy, or a cloze procedure.

The discussion as to whether or not oral language should be part of the reading program brought out the significance of respect for and use of the child's oral language, particularly in the early stages of reading. The use of oral-aural comprehension exercises might help students see the common elements in spoken content and reading content thereby enabling them to generalize from the spoken word to the printed word.

The early childhood group perceived Dr. Guszak as an open learner as he shared with the conference group his experiences with young children. The question, "When is the best

time to begin reading instruction?" was aired. The group concurred with Dr. Guszak's assertion that informal instructional may begin when the child gives cues which indicate that he is ready to begin reading.

Time is an important factor in beginning reading instruction. Enough time must be allotted during instructional periods for young children to work through the mechanics of learning. Children who are not given enough time to master beginning skills are often erroneously labeled "slow learners."

Middle school educators discussed three major concerns: (1) reading in the content areas, (2) the teacher's role in the educational process, and (3) deficiencies in pre-service and in-service training for teachers. Not a few of the middle school participants were concerned with the problem of how to extend reading instruction into the content ateas. Two factors contribute to the need for such a move: first, many adolescents do not read and are turned off by reading and, second, reading instruction is required by the state only as far as the seventh grade. Given the circumstances of unmotivated students and no reading instruction beyond the seventh grade, it is vital that reading instruction be included in the content subjects. Two strategies were suggested for achieving this goal:

1. A skill-of-the-month plan whereby all content teachers emphasize a particular reading skill, e.g., outlining, etc.
2. A plan whereby reading and language arts teachers assess the readability of content texts and convey that information and its implications to the content teachers.

In discussing Title I programs, a speaker representing the State Department of Education encouraged the teachers to submit proposals using an integrated approach to the teaching of reading. Proposals might include art, music, creative dramatics, rhythmic movement, dance, etc. A program of this kind would be cognitively appropriate and would involve the affective domain in reading as well. In writing proposals it should be noted that as guidelines become broader, the process of evaluation becomes more stringent due to the pressures of accountability.

One of the concerns of reading specialists was expressed in the question, "How can we reduce teacher resistance to the support that reading specialists can offer?" The following statements summarize the ideas suggested by the discussants:

1. Model your own suggestions. Work with a group of children within a teacher's classroom so that the teacher can see the "how" and "why" of your suggestions.
2. Be supportive of teachers' needs and interests concerning reading instruction.
3. Tactfully make teachers aware of reading workshops or conferences.

The discussants decried the lack of preparation in reading at the pre-service level. In their discussion of the deficiences of pre-service and in-service training, they listed the following needs:

1. More reading courses at the undergraduate level.
2. More in-school experience beginning in the freshman year.
3. More communication between field site personnel and university students.
4. More in-service courses for continued teacher development.

Teachers of teachers directed their remarks to some of the concerns in teacher preparation: course texts, course content, and pre-service training. The discussion of texts used in teacher-training revealed varied practices and raised a few questions. Some teachers prefer to use the "how to" texts of Spache,Guszak, and others. Some create the text from lectures, readings, research by the students, and hand-outs. Does using one text limit students who are preparing to be teachers? Did the old texts that were more general prove to be more useful? Are not many texts for beginning teaching too difficult for inexperienced students? These problems were not resolved. However, it was felt that teachers who use a major text and

repeatedly teach the same course find it difficult to remember that the concepts presented are new to the students. Changing texts may be good for teachers in that the change gives them a fresh approach.

Teacher education needs to include more activities that give students the kinds of "real" experiences that they will encounter in the classroom. For pre-service teachers, defer some of the philosophy and teach them what they need for the first few years of teaching.

The following practices were seen as constraints to teacher preparation:

1. Many states require little preparation in reading.
2. Institutions are unwilling to give the time required to develop competencies in the essential skills.
3. There are often too many student-teachers at a given time for proper supervision.
4. Students are not required to give enough of their time for preparation as teachers.

In order to obtain a better perspective of what is happening in teacher education, a team might gather the programs from teacher-training institutions and tabulate the competencies that make up teacher training, for it seems that we are completing fewer but going more in depth.

Questions about the direction of teacher training need to be considered. Are institutions expecting too much from students at the entry level? Do we need more than three credits in reading in teacher preparation? Where would we get the time needed for an expanded program? Would a fifth year at the undergraduate level encourage or discourage future teachers? There are no easy answers.

SCHOOL READING PROGRAMS

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In 1966-67 the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the beginning reading programs then currently in use in Granite School District, Salt Lake City, Utah.

The testing program for that year involved pre-tests of the *Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis* and the *Lorge Thorndike I.Q. Test.* February and May testing included the *Gates-MacGinitie* silent reading vocabulary and comprehension tests, the *Gilmore Oral* reading rate, accuracy and comprehension tests, *Attitude Toward Reading* test, *Motivation to Read* test, creative writing sample to measure number of words, clause index and T-unit length, and a *Linguistic Reading Test.* A total of 1,295 first grade pupils were involved in the study.

The results of this evaluation identified those programs which were yielding the greatest end-of-year achievement for three different beginning-of-year readiness levels. No single reading program was found to be either significantly better than all others on all variables or to be uniquely effective for pupils of any given level of pre-instructional readiness.

In addition to the comparative study of beginning reading programs, pupils in a variety of reading programs for several years were evaluated. Gains made over a five-year period of pupils who had been taught reading in one of seven basal reading programs were compared. Pupils in the study had been in the same basal reader for the first five years of their schooling. I. Q. scores were used to group them in high, middle, and low ability groups. This comparison of gains indicated that no single basal reading program was outstanding for high, middle, or low ability pupils and that the I.Q. level of the pupil affected the gain score, the higher I.Q. pupils making the greater gains in reading achievement, regardless of the program.

An analysis of teacher differences was made possible with a regression equation used to determine residual gain scores for each pupil. Those teachers with a greater percentage of their low, middle, or high ability pupils above the regression line (perform better than predicted) were the ones who were getting greatest gains; hence these teachers were then observed to determine what characteristics of teacher behavior are associated with these differences in effectiveness. It was found that the teachers who were getting greatest gains above prediction were spending more time per day in direct reading instruction. Time spent daily in direct reading instruction was related to the achievement gain of pupils.

Because of the influence of teachers on pupil behaviors, pupils need teachers who:

1. Provide time for the number of practices needed and additional skills activities for those who need them.
2. Prompt (model, demonstrate) so pupils respond correctly (and are able to make finer discriminations) and gradually fade prompts until they respond correctly independently of the teacher.

3. Elicit responses from pupils. Allow them to do and say.
4. Diagnose and prescribe instantly when incorrect or no responses occur.
5. Believe they can learn. Expect high mastery (95 - 100%) levels with rate as a criterion. Allow them to move on in skills sequences as rapidly as they achieve mastery.
6. Employ consistently behavior management techniques which most effectively extinguish incorrect responses, reinforce correct responses and maintain them at the rate and accuracy levels established.

In investigating the importance to beginning readers of saying words aloud in learning to recognize and understand words and sentences, a significant superiority was found in reading achievement in children who learned reading by the oral method over children who did not verbalize their reading. The data also suggest that oral responding might have motivational properties for children of lower intellectual ability. Oral responding by beginning readers facilitates the recognition and comprehension of printed words and sentences. The children who responded orally were superior on a test which called for the application of a variety of reading skills in contexts different from those taught in the study.

Verbalization may increase the accuracy of retention, for in dividing pupils into two groups, "vocalizers" and "visualizers" according to whether or not they overtly verbalized during observation, findings indicated "vocalizers" tended to recall details more accurately than the "visualizers."

(In a similar study verbalization was experimentally manipulated to measure retention. It was found that subjects who verbalized their responses had an overall superiority on the recognition test, both in terms of more correct and of fewer incorrect responses. Delayed retention tests given one week later showed continued superiority in the verbalization group.)

In a study of the effects of errors in discrimination learning with children, it was found that pupils who make fewer errors as they learn are more accurate in the fine discriminations necessary in learning complex relationships.

Leif Fearn in *The Quest for Competency in Teaching Reading* writes, "Pupils tending toward the lower end of a rank order of achievement test scores can benefit greatly from being provided an accurate oral model of the material which they are reading."

G. A. Kimble and J. J. Wulff looked at the value of guiding pupils' responses. Two kinds of participation procedures were used in their study. In one of the trainee's participations, responses were guided and were restricted to the right ones or nearly the right ones. In the other, the trainees had to try to make the correct response unaided. The evidence obtained clearly favors the first procedure. The findings suggest that a major factor in the beneficial effect of student participation procedure is the fact that participation elicits the practice of correct responses while discouraging incorrect ones. The assumption here is that practice alone is not enough. The responses must be right. The positive effects of practicing desirable responses are cancelled by the negative effects of rehearsing incorrect ones.

Experience at our center and in experimental schools indicates that when a teacher diagnoses incorrect responses of pupils in reading and instantly prescribes activities to correct these responses, the teacher produces more accurate readers. The length of time it takes to make the diagnosis and the time between the diagnosis and the correction affect pupil gains. Steps for instant error diagnosis and prescription have been developed at the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction.

Mastery Learning

Benjamin Bloom has written,

Each teacher begins a new term (or course) with the expectation that about a third of his students will adequately learn what he has to teach. He expects about a third of his students to fail or to just "get by." Finally, he expects another third to learn a good deal of what he has to teach, but not enough to be regarded as "good students." This set of expectations, supported by school policies and practices in grading, becomes transmitted to the students through the grading procedures and through the methods and materials of instruction. The system creates a self-fulfilling prophecy such that the final sorting of students through the grading process becomes approximately equivalent to the original expectations.

This set of expectations, which fixes the academic goals of teachers and students, is the most wasteful and destructive aspect of the present educational system. It reduces the aspirations of both teacher and students; and it systematically destroys the ego and self-concept of a sizeable group of students who are legally required to attend school for 10 to 12 years under conditions which are frustrating and humiliating year after year. The cost of this system in reducing opportunities for further learning and in alienating youth from both school and society is so great that no society can tolerate it for long.

Most students (perhaps over 90 percent) can master what we have to teach them, and it is the task of instruction to find the means which will enable our students to master the subject under consideration. Our basic task is to determine what we mean by mastery of the subject and to search for the methods and materials which will enable the largest proportion of our students to attain such mastery.

In a study of mastery (100% accuracy in each of three consecutive trials with rate as a criterion), we found that low ability subjects can achieve high rates of performance and can learn and master sound-symbol relationships if they are given ample practices and a carefully sequenced program.

It also was found that the higher the I.Q., fewer oral responses and less time are required.

Low-responding pupils' rates of response, with continued practices to achieve mastery, will exceed the high-responding pupils' rates of mastery, if expectations are higher. Rate of accurate responses can be increased through continued practices with accuracy and rate as criteria.

Other studies of high mastery expectations have indicated that 90 to 95 percent of pupils learning under mastery strategies have achieved at the same high level as did the top 20 per cent of pupils who had learned under non-mastery conditions in years past; only those treatment groups who were expected to achieve at 85 per cent and 95 per cent mastery (as compared to 65 per cent and 75 per cent) retained to a significantly greater extent than the nonmastery treatment groups; 95 per cent of what was learned was retained; 95 per cent mastery yields significantly greater scores on problems where transfer is needed.

The average number of responses per minute requested by teacher and emitted by pupils was higher in experimental schools than in control schools. The amount of time during a reading class in which pupils *were not* given the opportunity to respond ranged from 0 to 5 per cent for the experimental teachers as compared to 50 to 80 per cent for the control teachers.

Our studies found that oral reading rate and accuracy were functionally related to contingent applications of approval and pennies. As the content difficulty of reading material

was increased, however, there was a marked decrease in the influence of reinforcement as a variable in controlling oral reading speed and accuracy. It was also found that, following instruction in the use of contingency management, the frequency of teachers' use of contingent stimuli increased drastically and teachers reduced classroom behavior problems through the contingent use of teacher attention. Teachers need to be taught an effective management and monitoring system.

From research and observation come the following six activities which can assist teachers to achieve excellence in teaching reading in their school programs.

1. Identify reading and language arts skills. List them. Verbalize them. Recognize them in pupils' behavior. Recognize readiness as the performance of the task.
2. Utilize the six teaching techniques listed above which will affect significantly pupils' achievement and attitudes.
3. Seek inservice education. Ask for assistance from teachers, principals, university professors, parents. Learn from observation of pupils. Invite observers. Ask to be monitored.
4. Set aside and use time for study, development of effective teaching behavior and preparation of materials.
5. Believe in yourselves. Banish negative thoughts. Be your own best friend.
6. Esteem the position of a teacher. Recognize the effect you have in others' lives.

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SYNTHESIS OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS AFTER ADDRESS ON SCHOOL READING PROGRAMS

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Small group discussion following Dr. Reid's presentation focused on teacher behaviors which she identified as important for developing successful readers. In her address, she asserted that all children can learn to read. The slow need only one-third more practices than do the fast in skills learning. Participants asked discussion leaders for a clarification of that assertion. Discussion revealed that while all can learn the same basic skills of reading, the difference between the high and low achievers lies in the application and interpretation of the material. Simple mastery on the literal level can be taught to non-talented children as well as to talented children. Reading can be broken down into (1) skills which are taught and (2) abilities which are associated with the innate talent of the reader. Slow learning children can and do learn the skills. Dr. Reid demonstrated techniques for teaching several skills.

The techniques which Dr. Reid used for increasing rate of response gave rise to discussion by participants in all of the small groups. Rate of response can be increased through various kinds of reinforcement to the respondent, but most studies show that artificially induced gains in rate decay rapidly after training. "Timed response" can be effectively applied to learning new vocabulary for it motivates active cognitive involvement on the part of the learner.

Learning theory approaches like timed response will help a student learn referentials, but how does that transfer to connected reading? One discussion leader responded to the question by saying that fluent oral reading provides the basis for silent reading fluency. A child's oral fluency can be developed through prepared oral reading by (1) learning the vocabulary through timed response activities, (2) practicing the oral reading passage alone, (3) reading the prepared material to another child, and (4) reading the practiced material to a group (or, in the case of a shy child, putting the material on tape for listening). The audience listens to the practiced product, but no one, not even the teacher, follows along in the printed text. The oral presentation must be conversational and sound "right." While this is but a single example, it illustrates one way in which "timed response" transfers to connected oral and silent reading. This is mastery learning that makes the child as well as the teacher responsible for the outcome.

A number of participants argued that rate of response is affected by variables over which we as teachers have no control: socio-economic differences, family background, maturation, nutrition, etc. Others pointed out that there are variables over which teachers *do* have control, namely, those teacher behaviors which bring about greater teacher effectiveness.

Some of the participants accepted the teacher behavior of instant diagnosis as a necessary and exciting component of teacher effectiveness. Other participants, however, questioned the meaning of "instant." The questioning specialists came to the conclusion that instant diagnosis probably did not refer to generalization about instructional needs on the basis of single word error, but rather on the basis of adequate diagnostic procedures. Many needs are identified in the daily course of instruction but are left untreated. Those that can be treated on the spot or shortly thereafter without interrupting the flow of meaning should be corrected as soon as possible. This is probably what was meant by instant diagnosis. The severely disabled reader, on the other hand, needs diagnosis, thoughtful analysis, and the

careful selection of strategies for remediation. The specialist or clinician should diagnose no further than is necessary to identify strengths, needs, and strategies for instruction. Not every child requires that kind of intensive diagnosis.

While reading is not necessarily part of the curriculum for the very young, a number of kindergarten pupils do learn to read. Assessment and diagnosis at this level should be informal. Skills instruction should be provided for those children who exhibit the necessary readiness for reading. Also important at this level is that very young children be motivated to want to read. They are motivated when they see those with whom they interact engaged in reading -- parents, siblings, and teachers -- and when they share in the joy of stories which are read to them. The teacher behaviors identified by Dr. Reid are as essential to teaching very young children as they are in dealing with older students.

Participants revealed some concerns about behavior management techniques; one regarding the principle of behavior modification and, two, its use in the middle school. In response to queries about alternatives to token rewards, participants suggested games, adaptations of television game shows, taped readings made by middle school children for use in the lower grades, cross-age tutoring, reading other students' writing, and sustained silent reading.

In the teacher training group there was a concern for Dr. Reid's application of Skinnerian psychology to the teaching of reading and an expression of the need to temper its use with the inclusion of affective objectives as well. The affective aspect of interaction with children was mentioned by Dr. Reid only in terms of motivation. Research in what makes "great teachers" has shown an emphasis in the affective area.

The First Grade Studies of the sixties to which Dr. Reid alluded in support of her thesis elicited opposing points of view. Teachers asked, "Are the results of those studies -- that teacher behavior is of greater significance than materials in affecting gains in reading achievement -- applicable to today's reading instruction? Some believe that the results of the studies are as meaningful today as they were when the studies were done. They believe that it is the teacher and not the materials that makes the difference in the quality of instruction.

Those opposing that view maintained that the results of the First Grade Studies must not be rigorously applied to today's teaching strategies. The studies were based on methods that are outmoded today. Teacher effectiveness has been overemphasized, and the new reading materials incorporating psycholinguistics, criterion-referenced management systems, and self-pacing devices will have a bigger payoff in pupils' learning to read. While teachers' effectiveness will always play an important role, it may be less of a factor in the success of children's learning to read than was indicated in the First Grade Studies.

That the most effective teachers cannot maintain fidelity to any one set of materials expresses the view of Dr. Reid, discussion groups, and discussion leaders. More important than a thorough steeping of teachers in the content and mechanics of commerical materials is teachers' understanding of the process of reading and the set of subskills involved in reading. *Understanding Reading*,[1] *The Psychology of Reading*, [2] and *Reading Miscue Inventory Manual* [3] are a few of the available resources for teachers of reading and reading specialists who want to improve their understanding of the process of reading. It has only been within the past five years that we in education have begun to understand the process. If Dr. Reid's presentation is to be criticized, it might be criticized for her not having included the practitioner's need to understand the reading process.

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SUM AND SUBSTANCE

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Educators charged with the responsibility of teaching the nation's children to read face demands from many segments of the population. "Why can't our children read better?" ask researchers, legislators, parents, businessmen, teachers and other taxpayers. Unfortunately many request a simple, single answer. Teachers themselves look for answers as they are bombarded with words which haunt their reading world.

Advertisers' claims would have little impact on the professional without recognition of the hard truth in Schnepf and Meyer's (1971) statements:

> *Generally speaking, educators have not given priority to program planning. As a consequence, insufficient time is set aside for improving reading programs. Curriculum planning committees must give extra time after school hours to their task. It is not surprising that they look for quick answers to their problems. New textbooks are often seen as the solution. (p. 9)*

To be successful, a reading program must incorporate a synthesis such as that suggested by Robinson and Rauch (1965); that is, a sound reading program should:

1. be planned cooperatively by the total school community
2. coordinate reading activities with learning theory and with human growth and development.
3. integrate the language arts with all subject areas
4. plan for continuity of reading interests, achievement, and developmental needs of students
5. make provisions for individual differences based on continuous diagnosis
6. provide for frequent assessment and modification of program goals, of implementation, and of evaluation
7. provide feedback to students, to school personnel, to parents, and to the community at large
8. be directed toward attainable goals:
   a. developing readers who can and do read for enjoyment, for information, to satisfy curiosity, or -- just because . . .
   b. obtaining skill in the location and use of references related to a specific topic
   c. organizing and presenting ideas gathered from different sources.

The sum and substance of the effective reading program can be found within an adequate emphasis upon the following:

1. School organization
2. Classroom organization
3. Instructional and ancillary personnel
4. Instructional and support materials
5. Individual and program evaluation

School Organization

Who decides how a school will be organized? the physical faculty? staff? support personnel?

How will students be assigned? Self-contained classroom? Pod? Department? Cross age-grade?

Many decisions are made at state department and local school district level. It must be admitted that community involvement is occasionally sought when a new school is planned. Some district school boards hold open hearings before building is initiated and staff selected. With or without input from constituencies, school organization frequently begins with an administration-designate working under specified guidelines. The focus for the administrator is to open a school by a deadline date with as few problems as possible. Organization for a reading program generally follows several years later.

Curriculum committees begin the organizational task in form of change. While change may be initiated within a school, effective planning should include state and local administrators, professionals responsible for teacher training and for research, parents, and other community leaders. A major question to be answered by such a team would be, "How will this school be organized to reach desired educational goals?" Several options are available -- given physical facility and staff: (a) self-contained classroom, (b) cross-grade assignment, (c) departmentalization, (d) nongraded segments, (e) open-space, or pod area. Complete agreement among team members is not always reached, but study of each alternative can culminate with a decision to accept an organizational plan found successful in a similar school setting. To be sure, the organization must be considered workable by the professional staff and acceptable to the community.

Concurrently, other teams should be at work to identify goals for the reading program. Serious consideration must be given to the reading needs of the student population, as needs may well dictate the organizational plan. Work for this team is clear: massive research of existing data, assessment and evaluation of student reading status, and directional trends in performance to be synchronized.

Standardized tests, with all of their reported limitations, must be used, as well as task-referenced instruments, along with informal measures of reading behavior and teacher-pupil attitude, to assess reading achievement and possible capacity.

Other aspects of assessment I shall treat in another section of this paper; here, though, I must state that teacher personality is crucial to school organizational success. Of what use is a pod school when every teacher is "self-contained"? Or a self-contained class when every teacher is a subject area specialist? Or cross-age/grade grouping when every teacher is a grade-level expert?

Classroom Organization

For purpose of this discussion the classroom is defined as any physical space designated to be occupied by x teachers and x pupils. Post assignment decisions must be made, but some classroom organizational strategies are determined by school organization. The administration knows if 26+ children will be assigned to one teacher in a classroom, or if four teachers will be assigned to one pod, open space, or learning center with 100+ pupils.

Additional decisions must be made regarding the delivery system. The classroom then becomes a school within a school. Questions again arise. Will one teacher instruct 25 children in a large group -- requiring all to follow the same activities at the same time? Will the 25 pupils be sub-grouped according to "measured" reading achievement? Will an assessment-management system dictate pre-assessment on a series of skills and pupils be programmed into learning centers where instruction, reinforcement, practice or maintenance of skill is the goal? Will students be provided opportunity to read for recreation, to research an area of interest, to produce educational materials, manipulatives, or just things? Will

hardware be available to supplement instruction, capture the poorly motivated, or provide a period of meditation?

In conjunction with affiliated personnel, the teacher must decide. One factor to be considered is that the classroom/learning environment should be organized to facilitate individualization of instruction. The classroom for an effective reading program additionally provides (a) flexibility of physical environment and instructional strategies; (b) actualization of basic human needs -- to belong, to be successful, to progress toward reasonable goals; (c) use of a variety of instructional personnel -- peers, professionals, paraprofessionals, community workers; (d) realistic evaluation of progress; and (e) development of independent learners.

Durkin (1975) reports that classroom organization can be undercut by "little things." She cites among other factors, poor timing of materials distribution, setting up noise situations, involving one child rather than a group in an activity, open temptations to distraction, and means which override the end. Another useful source is "A Checklist for Evaluating Classroom Organization for Teaching" by Mary Brittain (in *Assessment Problems in Reading*, edited by Walter MacGinitie). She suggests that student characteristics, instructional goals, and implementation be factors in assessing classroom organization.

Instructional and Ancillary Personnel

No argument can be raised against the need for teacher training and experience because the teacher must translate plan into production. She is the core of the instructional team. She must know what and how to teach, how to evaluate the quality of learning, and how to provide alternative strategies when initial attempts meet little, or no success. Professional literature abounds with specifics relating what teachers should know, be able to do, and cause children to know and do. No better source is available than *Modular Preparation for Teaching Reading*, edited by Sartain and Stanton (IRA, 1974).

Allow me a point of departure in terms of teacher competence. In Chapter 2 of *The Classification of Educational Goals Handbook: II* (Krathwohl and others, 1964) note the erosion of affective objectives: "It is evident to us that there is a characteristic type of *erosion* in which the original intent of a course or educational program becomes worn down to that which can be explicitly evaluated for grading purposes and that which can be taught easily through verbal methods . . ." (p.176) These writers point to valuing as one vital aspect of the educational program. May I suggest that valuing the individual receive high priority in teacher behavior. Students are individuals; they bring to school individual aptitudes and attitudes. While verbalizing cliches intended to describe teaching toward individual needs, not all teachers truly accept individual differences. Attempts made to understand a pluralistic society lead to discussion of cultures and sub-cultures in American schools. Research studies, scholarly discourse, and instructional materials in recent years have attempted to provide educational guidelines.

As has been observed by Biglmaier (1969): "Culture is socially transmitted. Culture is learned behavior which each person acquires as a member of an organized group of individuals or society, and each personality is the product of its own unique cultural history." (p.21)

An aspect of understanding differences lies in understanding the variability within groups. Not all Black children have had the same experiences. Not all Spanish surnames represent the same history as is obvious in Florida's Cuban, Mexican and Puerto Rican Americans. The classroom teacher is not called upon to become a sociologist, and anthropologist, or a linguist. Being human is requisite to understanding differences. True acceptance of others begins with understanding and acceptance of one's self.

Extensive attention has been given to language differences brought to the classroom. I take no sides here in the argument of language differences being a major barrier to success in learning to read. I merely cite personal behaviors exhibited on recent trips to countries where mine was not the language of the majority. Within four weeks I became "nonverbal." My communications reverted to pointing, head shaking, fragmented utterances, confusion in directions, and inappropriate learnings, not to mention gross mispronunciations. The factor which allowed me to dare venturing into the world of strangeness was the observed willingness of people to communicate. I submit that the teacher must be willing to communicate with each child: to listen though she cannot translate; to value though she cannot understand; to accept though she cannot believe.

While the teacher is characterized as the core of the instructional team, other professionals, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and community leaders work together for an effective program. Support personnel have their influence on the self-concept of children. These significant other professionals must approach instructional or guidance situations with a firm commitment that their role is important. They are partners with the teacher in fostering affective growth. Children often share emotions with non-instructional adults, while the teacher is engaged with other youngsters. Additionally, numerous learning mediators can insure progress toward goals which spell success. As Quick (1973) has stated, "Self-concept and achievement appear to be interrelated -- that is, poor achievement usually promotes a depreciation of one's self-concept, which, in turn, leads to continued poor achievement" (p. 469).

Educational professionals fall short of their responsibilities when they fail to utilize the non-expert tasks which parents can obviously undertake: (a) supervising school work, (b) preventing peer situations which develop negative attitudes toward school, (c) exposure to social and occupational situations, (d) providing the food, clothing, and shelter which make it possible for the child to attend and learn from school.

Duncan and Vonbehren (1974) report a successful parent involvement program called PEPPER -- Parent Education Program to Pep up Every Reader. Freshour (1972) conducted evening sessions with parents and found that they wanted to help their children in school. Both studies indicate that parents can contribute significantly to the child's learning by attending physical needs, mediating between child and his environment, and developing positive self-concept.

Instructional and Support Materials

There appears to be nothing inherent in a set of instructional materials which make them "good for" or successful with a group of children. For one child -- maybe; as the format, content, and instructional procedure might strike a learning chord. But somewhere between child and materials there stands a teacher -- not necessarily college trained or certified but a teacher nonetheless.

As teachers struggle to decide whose bright box is best, they need some criteria to evaluate instructional material. Two sources have been valuable to me as I have worked with pre and inservice teachers: *Criteria for Evaluating Basic and Supplementary Materials in Reading and Literature*, a 1967 publication of the California State Department of Education, and "The Application of a Category System in the Content Analysis of a Reading Program" (*Elementary English*, September, 1973).

Individual and Program Evaluation

The effective reading program must be self-policing. Along with planning of objectives, there must be identification of proposed evaluation measures. As stated earlier in this paper, standardized tests have value but not as the sole indicators of progress as tests alone do not tell the complete story. Much confusion exists in the minds of the public and in the procedures used by professions regarding differences in definitions of testing, assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation. I define evaluation to allow for inclusion of quantitative as well as qualitative reports, to allow for judgment and for hypothesis raising. The vocabulary of evaluation is adequately presented by Hill (1974). He further reports the need to include systematic observation, progress charts, checklists, library records, interviews, anecdotal records, and autobiographies for assessment; these evaluation measures can be used with individuals as well as with a total program.

To be sure, an informed public can accept evaluation of individuals and programs; the questions of time and finances are sure to arise. I submit that architect and builders of effective reading programs will find themselves out of work if time is not taken or money spent to tell the progress story as it really is. Why should we stand aside and let the "numbers" people report only a part of our success story? Yes, it might be easy to quantify student status, but what of the immediate and long range effect on school morale. We cannot expect professional dedication to half-truths or public support of expensive failures.

Individual and program evaluation might well be directed toward presentation of circumstantial evidence. Acceptance of this departure from traditional reporting might come slowly, but it must come if the promise of successful educational achievement is to be realized.

In summary, the criteria for effective reading programs are not written and they should not be written; they should evolve as each program moves from organization through implementation to evaluation. It is expected that these criteria should represent analysis of the most miserable failures and the most glowing successes. Of lasting value will be the continued process of "becoming" which should be characteristic of any institution whose prime beneficiaries are humans. The tasks are ours; yesterday is a good time to begin.

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GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE READING PROGRAM

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School districts around the country spend enormous sums of money and expend tremendous energies in developing reading programs which they hope will prove effective in teaching children to read. Too often, monies and efforts are channeled in such a way that little improvement is seen. The ten guidelines presented in this paper give administrators, curriculum leaders, and teachers interested in studying the thoroughness of the reading programs, a skeletal structure from which to begin. The guidelines are broad enough to encourage flexibility, so crucial in providing for differences among schools, and yet they encompass the many different components which must be considered in a school reading program.

1. *The goals of the reading program should include the areas of word recognition, vocabulary development, comprehension, and interest in reading.* Too often one area is emphasized while others are given only cursory attention or are even ignored. Any individual or committee studying its reading program should be alert to the dangers of such an "overemphasis." For example, there is much popularity for increasing the emphasis on word attack skills, and school districts may find themselves increasing the amount of time on "drill of skills." Yet as stated by Diederich, "we do know how to get practically all children past the initial stages of learning to read (1973, p.5). He feels that our "national reading problem might just as easily be called the national thinking comprehension problem . . ." (p. 5). It is important that we emphasize word attack as a *means* to an end, that of comprehension. The balance (or imbalance) between these two aspects of the reading process is a sensitive one which needs to be considered quite seriously by all school districts.

Vocabulary is an important factor in improving comprehension skills (Pavlak, 1971) and should be given a place of importance in all reading programs. Opportunities for developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing vocabularies should be part of all reading curriculum.

Study skills, which can begin in the early grades (locating the table of contents, locating the title), are crucial if students are going to be able to transfer their reading skills to the various content areas.

Finally, no program is complete if it does not provide opportunities which make reading a joyous and exciting experience. The library program, the language arts program, including literature, writing, speaking, and listening, must be considered as crucial ingredients in a comprehensive reading program. The school which attempts to provide meaningful experiences in all of the language arts develops in its children (1) a sense of the relationship among the communication skills, (2) a need to read to develop other language skills, and (3) an interest in becoming a life long reader.

2. *The teacher should have a thorough understanding of the reading process and be competent in diagnostic teaching.* As indicated by all of the conference speakers, the teacher is an important factor in determining the success of any reading program. Therefore any school district which wishes to improve its reading program must consider its teachers -- their understanding and commitment to the teaching of reading. If requests for in-service programs which come into the Office of Continuing Education at the University of Pittsburgh are any indication of teacher commitment, we can be certain of a high level of interest in the teaching of reading. The teachers surveyed indicated as their highest priorities: (1) individualization of instruction, and (2) diagnosis and remediation of reading problems. We

might also hypothesize that teachers are uncertain in these areas and, realizing their own needs, are requesting in-service instruction.

Districts hiring beginning teachers should investigate thoroughly the pre-service education of each candidate as to the quality and quantity of the educational experiences related to the teaching of reading. If school districts would hire beginning teachers who have a thorough background in the teaching of reading, it would not only influence the reading program in those districts but (1) would encourage colleges and universities to redesign their undergraduate programs if they lack a reading emphasis, and (2) encourage graduate students to plan a program which includes more than the required courses in reading.

In these proceedings, Frank Guszak lists five criteria which exemplify the diagnostic teacher. These criteria should prove useful to teachers and school districts wishing to assess the competency of teachers of reading.

3. *A methodology for teaching reading should be eclectic, that is, components of various approaches and methods should be available to provide for the individual differences of students.* If we believe in the individual differences of children as well as the individual differences in teachers, then we must give more than lip service to this objective. Although school districts may feel comfortable adopting a well known, well-researched basal reader as its core program, this basal cannot and should not be the entire reading program. The teacher who supplements the basal with language experience opportunities and individualized reading as well as other creative experiences builds a well-rounded exciting program for the children in his or her classroom. The teacher who observes children experiencing difficulty in learning through the basal should be able to plan teaching strategies which might be very different from those suggested in the basal. The teacher may see a need for more intensive phonics work, using a synthetic or part-to-whole approach rather than the analytic or word-to-part approach used in the basal. As educators, teachers need to have the knowledge to make these decisions and the freedom to implement them in their classrooms.

4. *Grouping plans should be flexible and short term.* One of the characteristics of American reading instruction is the "three group" plan which for many people indicates that individualization is taking place. This grouping procedure as well as attempts at homogeneous grouping in reading have encouraged rigid inflexible groupings which have done little to provide for the reading growth of children. Grouping is generally done on the basis of standardized reading tests or group intelligence test scores. On the basis of these results each child is slotted into a group, usually for the entire year, if not for several years. Teachers are led to believe that individual differences are provided for, yet they are cognizant of the many differences in one group, from Johnny who is last to finish reading, to Susie, who pronounces each word correctly and reads with great expression, but can't answer any questions about the material she has read. Grouping on the basis of a single test score does not provide for the range within the group on the basis of sub-skills or interests.

Sartain (1968, pp. 214-216) suggests the following types of grouping:

1. *reading-power groups* which describe the basal groups to which children are assigned.
2. *skills-refinement groups* which are formed to provide for the specific skill needs of individual or small groups of children. Children from any one of the reading-power groups may need additional practice or instruction in a specific skill and a skills-refinement group may be formed on a temporary basis to provide the necessary instruction. These groups may also be formed to provide challenging experiences for children who are advanced in specific skills.

3. *activity groups*, which like the skills-refinement group are formed on a temporary and flexible basis, are composed of children who wish to work together on an activity or activities relating to reading (recreational reading, dramatization, unit activities, etc.).

If these grouping plans were implemented in classroom, flexible grouping would be the norm, and teaching to the average would be less evident.

5. *Materials and facilities which support individualization of instruction should be available.* Although school districts may prefer to select only one basic reading text, there is a need for materials of various kinds and levels if the individual needs of children are to be met. The classroom teacher is able to differentiate the instruction much easier if he/she has available materials such as multi-level kits, records or audiotapes with books, game kits, and manipulative devices. There are many attractive materials available today which permit the teacher to assume a facilitator role for *some* of the instructional time; that is, he/she can assign children to the appropriate material at an appropriate level for reinforcement or review purposes, and then work with children needing additional help. The availability of a wide variety of materials can increase the possibility of individualization of instruction; however, it certainly does not guarantee its occurrence. The teacher must be taught to utilize the material in an effective manner if maximum usage is to be made of it. Similarly, moveable desks, a classroom library, small reading corners, etc., are not a guarantee of individualization; however, they do enable the teacher who chooses to individualize a better environment in which to implement her plans, and the existence of these facilities should certainly provide a message to most teachers.

6. *The reading program should include the following three components: a developmental program, a corrective-remedial program, and an extended or independent reading aspect.* If a school district wishes to provide for the varying abilities of its children, it should in some form include all three programs. First, the school district should provide a developmental program, in which broad guidelines are established as to scope and sequence of skills, materials, and assessment strategies. The developmental component provides for continuity of instruction for most of the children in the school program and establishes goals of reading instruction. The corrective-remedial program, which provides for the needs of children experiencing difficulties in learning to read, is an essential part of the curriculum. Both *classroom* teachers and special teachers (remedial reading teachers, reading specialists, etc.) need to be involved in helping children with reading problems, that is, the classroom teacher cannot and should not assume that the remedial reading teacher is completely responsible for improving the reading skills of problem readers. It is only with the interest and help of classroom teachers that children with reading problems can be given total support.

The corrective program provides for the child with a slight reading problem or a specific skill deficiency (for example, slow rate in reading). The corrective program should occur *in* the classroom with the teacher making instructional adjustments for children who may need reteaching, additional practice, and/or special material. Schools can establish corrective programs if (1) they provide materials which enable their teachers to individualize, (2) support a curriculum which provides for flexibility in scope and sequence, and (3) continue in-service education to further develop the teaching skills of their teachers. There may be occasions when the special reading teacher works with children who have been diagnosed as needing corrective instruction; however, as a rule these children can be helped to overcome their difficulties with effective classroom programs. The remedial program, on the other hand, necessitates the services of a reading specialist, or a special reading teacher who can perform the following functions: diagnose the strengths and needs of children with reading problems, and (2) provide intensive reading instruction to children experiencing severe problems in reading. Another function or role of the reading specialist, and a vital one,

is that of providing support to the classroom teacher so that the teacher can adjust instruction in the classroom environment. The reading specialist who ignores this role or who has difficulty assuming this role limits the effectiveness of his/her services.

A love of reading and literature and a desire to read are fostered through the enrichment or extended program. School districts which have no library facilities, nor time in the curriculum for enrichment reading, limit the reading growth of their students. Children can readily see the value the school places on reading. They can experience joy (or pain) depending on the school's approach to reading. The extended or enrichment program is for all children - it provides a means for applying the *skills* and for opening new worlds through reading to children. Recently, I visited an elementary school in the Pittsburgh area which has implemented Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR). Every afternoon, for 10 minutes, all people in the school read -- the principal, his secretary, the custodians, all of the teachers and children. No doubt these children perceive the value placed on reading and it is hoped that they will become life-long readers.

7. *Skills and attitudes regarding reading should be incorporated in all of the content areas to facilitate learning through reading.* If one were asked to identify an aspect of reading currently receiving great emphasis, it would be this one of teaching reading in the content fields. Reading educators realize that reading cannot be taught as effectively if it is taught *only* in the reading period. A plethora of materials, textbooks, and programs are currently being published, purchased, and distributed among content teachers. However, until content teachers themselves make a commitment to teaching reading in their respective fields, these materials, etc., will have limited value. Workshops and in-service education which provide a rationale and practical ideas about the teaching of reading in the content fields are essential in helping content teachers get a better grasp of this concept. If content teachers can be shown that effective utilization of printed material will help them to "get their content across," they will more readily get involved in learning about reading to learn.

8. *The community (including parents and other local citizenry) should be involved in the reading program through volunteer work and support in the home.* The role of parents in the reading program is one which still generates disagreement among educators. There is still some hesitation about considering parents as partners in the teaching process. However, some schools are getting parents involved in supporting the teaching process although the strategies differ from school to school. In-service programs for parents of children with reading problems are occurring across the country; parents have been asked to serve as tutors or aides in school programs; and many school districts are asking parents to sit on reading curriculum committees. As soon as educators realize that parents *can* help us in teaching their children to read, the efforts should expand and become more colleagial in nature.

9. *Administrative knowledge of the reading process and support of the reading program should be integral elements of the total reading program.* Any journal or book which describes effective reading programs will stress the importance of the instructional leader. His/her support of the program and knowledge of reading are crucial ingredients in building an effective reading program. The administrator who can provide his teachers with ideas about improving his/her reading program is to be valued. Of even more value, however, is the administrator who is willing to encourage and support the creative innovative teacher who wishes to make some exciting modifications in the reading program. This is not to say that administrators should give approval "carte blanche" to all teachers wishing to do something different but rather that he/she should be willing to listen to the rationale, the ideas, and then be flexible enough in his/her view towards curriculum to discuss implementation. A good program with an effective instructional leader can become an excellent program.

10. *Evaluation of the reading program should include both formative and summative processes.* The responsibility to assess our efforts with children is a very real and important one. However, too often we put all of our energies into summative evaluation which gives us information about the competence of the student at a given time, or the finished product. Standardized achievement tests may give us a "gestalt" as to the total school reading program, but unless persons take responsibility for interpreting and utilizing the results in effecting change, these scores do little more than to substantiate the fact that a school has a testing program. Standardized test scores can be used to (1) group children on a tentative basis, (2) provide a referral basis for children with reading problems, and (3) provide information about general strength and limitations in the reading program. More emphasis must be placed on formative evaluation which provides for on-going assessment and lends itself to program change more effectively by involving teachers on a continuous basis in the evaluative process. As stated by Bloom and Hastings,

> *Formative evaluation . . . intervenes during the formation of the student, not when the process is thought to be completed. It points to areas of needed remediation so that immediately subsequent instruction and study can be made more pertinent and beneficial. (1971, p. 20)*

This kind of evaluation can help in individualizing students' activities, revealing areas of difficulty, providing feedback to teachers which enable them to make changes in the instructional program. Checklists completed on individual children, informal measurement devices, and mastery tests on small units of learning can help each teacher to assess his/her teaching of reading and to make the necessary adjustments in providing effective instruction for all children.

Appraisal instruments which enable school personnel to assess their total school reading programs are available from various sources. The instrument developed by a committee of representative school personnel from the state of Pennsylvania entitled *"Criteria for Excellence in Reading: An Evaluation Scale" (1975)* is included in this monograph. Another instrument which might provide useful information to school districts interested in assessing their reading programs is the tool entitled *"Criteria for Assessing School Reading Programs, Kindergarten Through High School" (1970)*, prepared by the Connecticut Association for Reading Research.

The above guidelines are broad ones which permit and encourage flexibility in reading curriculum for individual school districts. Certainly the differences in school districts should be valued, hence, individual districts should view the set of guidelines as a highway to follow but be willing to take the side roads which make reading curriculum more exciting for children in schools across the nation.

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CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE IN READING*

An Evaluation Scale

Right to Read
Pennsylvania

1975

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Curriculum Services
Evelyn W. Miller, Coordinator
Pennsylvania Right to Read Effort

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INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of these criteria to help honest and educationally talented persons, whatever their position in a district, to break the blockade to relevant educational change. The focus should be centered on substance (does it work) rather than form (does it look good).

Conditions vary from district to district and from building to building within each district; nevertheless, these criteria may be considered applicable to all schools within the Commonwealth. It is the prerogative of each district and/or building to determine how to achieve the criteria based on local conditions, needs, capabilities, and desires.

These criteria for excellence in reading have been based on the successes and failures of the past in order to establish guidelines for the present. The intent is to refresh our efforts and stimulate a new excitement and a sense of purpose in reading. Only the involvement and the dedication of each individual to these goals will determine the degree of success.

(Criteria for Excellence in Reading, 1974)

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The evaluation scale developed as a component of the Pennsylvania Criteria for Excellence in Reading is intended to aid schools and school districts in developing quality reading programs and to aid in identifying exemplary reading practices and programs within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Through the Pennsylvania Right to Read Effort, information about exemplary reading practices and programs will be disseminated.

Evelyn W. Miller
Coordinator
Pennsylvania Right to Read Effort
September, 1975

INSTRUCTIONS

for use of

THE EVALUATION SCALE

Criteria for Excellence in Reading

Evaluators using the attached evaluation scale should follow the following procedure. Each item on the scale should be rated with a point value of *0 to 5*; 0 (zero) indicating an item not applicable, 1 (one) indicating a low score, 5 (five) indicating a high score. School district evaluators should place the score for each item in the "left hand" margin (validators may later place the score for each item in the "right hand" margin).

School district evaluators are requested to return a completed copy of the scale to the Pennsylvania Right to Read Office with a subtotal indicated for each section on the scale and a total indicated for the entire scale.

On the basis of information received from participating schools and school districts, a hierarchy of points will be established that will determine quality reading practices and programs. The Keystone State Reading Association has accepted the invitation of the Pennsylvania Right to Read Office and the Pennsylvania Right to Read State Advisory Council to provide teams of educators willing to visit the participating schools and school districts to validate the identified quality practices and programs.

Questions about the validation of exemplary reading practices and programs may be directed to the Pennsylvania Right to Read Office.

Pennsylvania Right to Read Effort
Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Curriculum Services
Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 17126
Telephone Number 717-787-7098

THE LEARNER

1. The school should establish some means to aid parents in their roles in developing communication skills and enjoyment in learning in their children, from infancy.

   a. The school maintains a communication system with parents through newsletters, notes, and telephone calls about positive aspects of student growth, various classroom activities, and suggestions for follow-up activities at home.
   In districts with significant populations of non-English-speaking persons, district publications are disseminated in the language or languages of the non-English groups.
   b. Regular meetings are held with parents to discuss child development, communication, and education.
   c. Opportunities for establishing rapport between school faculty, administrators and family are provided through open house, teas, and socials.
   d. The school identifies particular individuals who act as resource persons. Parents are given the names and roles of the individuals and are encouraged to contact them by telephone or a note about problems or concerns (classroom teacher, principal, guidance counselor, nurse).
   e. Planned programs are presented by the district to inform parents of activities which they can do at home to help their children develop better communication skills.
   f. Programs dealing with activities for the preschoolers are presented by the district to parents of preschool children.
   g. Parents are advised that materials are available for their use (library, guidance office, principal's office).
   h. A training program is provided for parent volunteers who aid in providing an educational program in the school.
   i. In-service meetings are presented by the district to instruct teachers, school psychologists, guidance counselors, etc. in providing parents through conferences with specific suggestions for developing communication skills and enjoyment in learning at home.

2. Instruction should be learner-centered and each learner guided through a planned arrangement of skills to read at his/her diagnosed expectancy level.

   a. The school district has adopted a learner-centered philosophy and has based a planned curriculum upon this philosophy.
   b. Reading is treated as a language arts component in which listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are interrelated.
   c. The school district has developed goals and objectives based upon the learner.
   d. The school district's reading program is based upon a planned scope and sequence of reading skills.
   e. Instruction is eclectic in nature, using valid approaches to the teaching of reading.
   f. Learning experiences are provided in all sensory modalities: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, olfactory.
   g. The school district has adopted a testing program which properly identifies the needs of the learner in reading and which also helps to identify the learner's expected reading level.
   h. The reading program is diagnostic-prescriptive.

i. The reading program has been planned based on the needs of the learner, keeping in mind his ethnic background, geographical location, and vocational interest of the community.
j. Reading is taught as an integral part of each subject area.
k. Various reading materials are made available to the learner so as to reach his needs and foster his interests.
l. The learner is given a choice of activities at some time during the school day.
m. The learner is provided instruction individually and in small groups as well as in large groups.
n. Instruction involves an exchange of ideas, opinions, and questions among teacher and students, and among students and students.
o. The classroom provides space where a student may work alone.
p. The learner has the opportunity to work on independent tasks using learning centers, teaching machines, self-directed programs, and other forms of educational technology.

3. The learner should be an active participant in determining his/her own goals, planning his/her program, and charting his/her progress.

a. The teacher and learner set specific goals for the individual needs of the learner.
b. The teacher and learner plan a set program for the learner to achieve his/her goal.
c. To promote a more positive self-concept in the learner, the reading program includes a self-choice of instructional materials and a self-selection of stories used in the reading program.
d. The learner maintains his/her own personal progress records.

4. The learner should be encouraged to use his/her interests and experiences as an integral part of reading.

a. Background for the material read is always provided for the learner.
b. Frequent discussions relating the learner's experiences with the material read are held by the teacher with the learner.
c. Reading at home is promoted by encouraging parents to make available proper levels of reading materials and materials which are relevant to the interests of the child and by encouraging story telling and story reading.

5. The learner should be guided to read widely and independently for his/her own purposes.

a. The learner is encouraged to pursue his/her interest in various topics through reading.
b. A variety of reading material is made available to the learner, especially in the classroom.
c. The learner is encouraged to use the school and public library facilities.
d. The learner is encouraged by teachers and parents to build his/her personal library at home through book clubs, book stores, etc.

STAFF

1. The administrator should recognize reading as a priority in the school program and enthusiastically provide functional and moral support regarding staff, time, facilities, budget, and community relations to maintain this priority.

    a. A philosophy of reading for the school system is a responsibility of the administration.
    b. Reading is regarded as a first priority when determining the curriculum budget.
    c. The reading program has a sufficient staff to operate as a quality program: a reading director or supervisor, reading specialists, teachers, teacher aides, tutors, consultants.
    d. Workshops on reading are provided for the staff to maintain a high quality reading program.
    e. The administrator keeps in constant touch with the on-going reading program by surveying the needs of the program and by involving the proper people in the planning of the program.
    f. The administrator prepares himself/herself professionally in obtaining some background in the field of reading.
    g. The administrator enlists the support of the local community by "selling" the reading program to the community and getting the parents involved.
    h. Meetings are held with the reading staff concerning budget increases as the program grows.
    i. School policies that affect the reading program are clarified by the administration and the reading staff.

2. A major responsibility of the building principal is to generate a warm personal atmosphere, setting the tone for the entire building.

    a. The principal's attitude will determine to a great degree the attitude of his/her staff; therefore, he/she maintains a positive attitude.
    b. The principal provides space and equipment for maintaining a high level reading program.
    c. For good working conditions line and staff responsibilities are clarified so that the chain of command is understood and respected.
    d. The principal makes certain that the guidelines established for the reading program are properly followed.
    e. The principal meets with his/her staff periodically to determine needs in the reading program and follows up on these needs.
    f. The principal observes classroom practices in reading and reviews these practices with each teacher and reading supervisor.
    g. The principal is familiar with classroom reading materials, including their proper use.
    h. The principal is an active participant in the planning of the reading program.
    i. The principal reports to the proper persons the needs of the reading program.
    j. The principal, with the classroom teacher, reports to parents the progress of their children in reading.
    k. The principal attends workshops on reading and obtains some background in the field of reading.

3. In every district a certified director should provide supervision, coordination, in-service training, and consultant services.

   This person should have the authority, freedom, and administrative support to maintain and implement a total reading program, thus becoming the liaison between administration and classroom teachers.

   The director should involve the total staff when planning the reading program.

   a. The district employs a full-time reading supervisor whose responsibility is solely language arts and reading.
   b. The reading supervisor directs a district-wide testing program to determine the reading abilities of all students and to identify those needing special help.
   c. The reading supervisor and staff develop cooperatively a district-wide language arts philosophy and curriculum, and interpret it to the school administration, the staff, and the public.
   d. The reading supervisor provides leadership and coordination in the language arts program of instruction and plans and administers advanced reading programs and remedial reading programs.
   e. The reading supervisor interprets student needs and progress in reading remediation to the classroom teacher and the parents.
   f. The reading supervisor and staff recommend adoption and use of varied instructional materials, including textbooks, reference works, kits, trade books, audio-visual aids, etc.
   g. The reading supervisor conducts in-service workshops and demonstrations pertinent to the reading and language arts program.
   h. The reading supervisor in conjunction with the staff devises and maintains such records and reports as are necessary to the successful execution of the reading program.
   i. The reading supervisor prepares and administers the departmental budget.
   j. The reading supervisor looks at the physical aspects of the reading program; i.e., classrooms, office space, storage facilities, etc.
   k. The reading supervisor disseminates information pertaining to the reading program to the school board, parents, and the community using personal meetings, newspapers, and appearances at service clubs.

4. The teacher should assume the responsibility of creating an atmosphere conducive to the learning process and promoting lifelong reading habits. In order to do this the teacher must demonstrate professional competency in the knowledge of the reading process and meet the learner's needs through an on-going diagnosis. The teacher must personally value reading, be creative and flexible, and be willing to grow professionally.

   a. The teacher is knowledgeable in the area of child development and its relationship to reading and language arts.
   b. The teacher understands the process of evaluation and chooses instruments to use for on-going diagnosis.
   c. The teacher has expertise in the sequential development of reading skills; i.e., word attack, comprehension skills, study skills, locational skills, etc.
   d. The teacher has extensive background in children's literature and incorporates the literature into exciting learning experiences in reading for school pupils.

e. The teacher knows when to ask the reading specialist for help when encountering learning-reading problems.
f. The teacher knows how to group pupils for reading instruction.
g. The teacher creates a warm personal atmosphere in the classroom.
h. The teacher is aware of each student's needs and tries to provide for these needs.
i. The teacher is responsible for reporting necessary improvements in the reading program to the proper persons.
j. The teacher seeks to further his/her knowledge of reading through further studies in the field, reading professional literature on reading instruction.
k. The teacher establishes a line of communication with parents, reporting the learner's progress.
l. The teacher promotes lifelong reading habits by encouraging the learner to read widely.
m. The teacher provides means for helping the learner develop a good self-concept by making it possible for him/her to succeed with the task and providing positive reinforcement.
n. The teacher continuously diagnoses each student's needs in reading through observation, formal and informal testing, and classroom performance.
o. The teacher thoroughly and efficiently preplans each reading lesson.
p. The teacher is a reader himself/herself and communicates this love for reading to the students.

5. A good program should utilize the supportive services of the following: community resource people, social agencies, librarians, speech therapist, hearing therapist, school physician, school nurse, school psychologist, home and school visitor, learning disability specialist, guidance counselor, consultants, and other staff members.

a. At appropriate times community resource people are utilized to promote the learner's interest to read.
b. School staff members utilize the services of various social agencies to help the school and home to provide for the learner's needs.
c. The librarian is directly involved in the planning of the reading program and is kept informed as to changes made in the program.
d. The speech therapist plans with the classroom teacher and reading specialist programs for the speech handicapped child.
e. The hearing therapist evaluates the hearing capacity of students suspected to have a hearing loss and makes recommendations for follow-up.
f. The services of the school physician are used by the school staff to provide for the needs of the learner suspected to have physical handicaps.
g. The school nurse screens students for visual, auditory, and other physical handicaps and makes referrals to doctors or dentists.
h. The school psychologist evaluates the learner's ability to learn and achievement in learning to help other school staff members provide for the learner's needs. The school psychologist is an advisor for the reading program.
i. The home and school visitor makes personal contacts with the home and provides background for helping to better understand the needs of the learner.
j. The learning disability specialist is involved in the planning of the reading program, and with the reading specialist and classroom teacher provides additional help for the disadvantaged learner.

k. The guidance counselor helps the classroom teacher and reading specialist to better understand the needs of the learner and helps to provide for these needs.
l. Consultive services are used by the district to broaden the scope of the reading program, to provide in-service activities for the staff, and to evaluate the reading program.

6. Paraprofessionals should enhance the reading program by working in the classroom with the teacher and outside the classroom in preparation of instructional materials, as required by the teacher, as their personalities, experiences, talents, and training allow.

a. Paraprofessionals are interviewed and screened. They are given responsibilities which most suit their abilities and the school's needs.
b. Paraprofessionals are paid by the school district, so that attendance is regular, and the reading program is not interrupted by frequent absences.
c. Paraprofessionals are in-serviced on basic educational theory and practices, the reading program, and the learners.
d. Teachers are in-serviced on the proper use of the paraprofessional, followed by a joint training session of both the teachers and paraprofessionals.
e. Paraprofessionals demonstrate a concern for the emotional and physical well-being of the learners in their daily experience with them.
f. Paraprofessionals have a checklist of the tasks they will perform in the classroom.
g. Paraprofessionals expect and receive from the professionals to whom they are assigned a planned program of their expected activities in a reading program.

7. Student and adult volunteers can contribute additional special talent and time to the reading program through tutorial, clerical, and general assistance.

Volunteers can be recruited from the ranks of the student body, service organizations, parents, retired persons, and local college students. Provisions should be made for orientation and periodic training of all volunteers.

a. A volunteer program is available for needs which arise from the reading program. Interviews are held to provide information regarding interest in becoming a volunteer, skills of the volunteer, responsibilities, etc.
b. Students help other students learn to read, but only where precautions have been taken to assure proper use of student help.
c. In-service workshops or informal meetings are held to acquaint student and adult volunteers of their roles in the reading program.
d. Space is provided where the volunteer can work.
e. Volunteers are identified in some positive way as they work in the district.

8. Staff will include maintenance and secretarial services which should contribute to a positive learning atmosphere.

   a. Maintenance and secretarial personnel are included in in-service programs, especially when the district is planning a new approach to learning. They are the first to meet the public and need to be kept informed.
   b. Maintenance and secretarial personnel are encouraged to maintain a positive climate for learning when the opportunity arises.
   c. The maintenance and secretarial personnel are included in functions which tend to help promote a positive learning atmosphere, such as plays.
   d. The maintenance staff is responsible for creating an environment conducive to positive learning.
   e. The secretarial staff is responsible for completing necessary assignments which will contribute to positive learning.

COMMUNITY

1. Enthusiastic support by the Board of Education is of paramount importance to the success of the district-wide reading program.

   a. The Board of Education allocates sufficient funds for staff and materials to support a quality reading program.
   b. The Board of Education encourages its administrators to seek actively additional funds through various state and federal sources.
   c. The Board of Education, with the cooperation of community representatives, includes a reading component in all appropriate sections of its long range development plan.
   d. The Board of Education needs to be informed by administrative staff on major changes in the reading program, district-wide reading test results, and district-wide evaluations made in reading.

2. The school should involve the various segments of the community in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the reading program.

   a. Community interests are represented on the district's advisory committees for reading, ESEA Title I and long-range planning.
   b. Community persons are invited to participate in evaluation programs for the district's various reading projects.
   c. Community resources are utilized in recruiting personnel for the reading programs.
   d. Community consultants are called upon in the selection process for reading text materials.

3. Parents may become involved through participation in parent-teacher organizations, in the classroom as volunteer teacher aides, and by nurturing at home the learning which has been initiated in school.

   a. The district encourages the formation and active programming of various parent groups, both district-wide and by building.
   b. The district has organized an effective system of volunteer parent aides with appropriate training opportunities.
   c. The district encourages parental involvement through a program of prescriptive activities parents may carry out at home with their children.
   d. Parents are encouraged through newsletters, meetings, etc., to contact the school concerning any question or suggestions about the reading program.

4. Reading instruction should be offered as a vital part of a community Adult Basic Education program. This program should meet the needs of functional illiterates, school dropouts, non-English speaking persons, and those seeking to improve reading-learning efficiency and/or to enhance personal reading enjoyment.

   a. The district sponsors an extensive adult education program with instruction geared to the various needs, e.g., functional illiterates, dropouts, non-English speaking persons, and others with specific reading problems or needs.

b. The adult education program is staffed by persons sensitive to the needs of the diverse problems of the adult community.
c. Periodically, the community is surveyed to determine needs for the Adult Basic Education program.
d. Consideration is given to taking the program to the adult student, e.g., at his place of work, a church, a community center. School buildings can pose a threat to some adults.
e. The school district is responsible for providing reading materials for the adult community through financially supported libraries, by placing reading material in locations of the community which adults frequent, etc.

5. A wide variety of community resources are available and should be used creatively to bring enrichment and relevance to the school experience.

a. The district encourages teachers and other staff persons to involve community persons in reading activities.
b. A directory of community resource persons has been developed by the district for staff use.
c. Programs are set up so that students may leave school to participate in community activities as part of the reading program.
d. Cooperative arrangements have been made with area libraries and other sources of reading materials, so that students may have access to a wide variety of sources.
e. In districts enrolling significant numbers of minority students, affirmative steps are taken to involve parents and other interested citizens from the minority communities.
f. A directory of community museums, industries, historical sites, etc.,has been compiled by the district for staff use in planning field trips.
g. Multi-media materials reflecting the community's world of work is available for student and staff use.

INSTRUCTION

There are many ways to teach reading. However, certain guidelines are necessary for a successful reading program.

1. The program should employ any one or a combination of approaches to the teaching of basic reading skills applicable to the total curriculum as determined by the needs of the individual.

   a. The district's reading program consists of various methods and approaches to reading so that each pupil may be taught by the method most suitable for him/her. For example, any combination of the approaches and methods listed below may be used:
      1. basal reading programs
      2. language experience
      3. individualized
      4. programmed
      5. Phonovisual
      6. i.t.a.
   b. Instruction is given at an effective rate and level for each pupil.

2. Flexibility should exist among and within the approaches according to teacher effectiveness in meeting individual needs.

   a. Teachers are made aware of various approaches to reading instruction through periodic in-service training.
   b. Continuous diagnoses of students' needs are made to assure flexibility in instruction.
   c. Students are grouped for instruction according to areas of weakness and are regrouped when weaknesses are overcome and new needs arise.
   d. Opportunities are provided for independent reading at all levels.

3. Program continuity should be achieved through progressive record keeping of the necessary reading skills.

   a. The reading staff should develop some method of effective record keeping of students' progress in all reading skills.
   b. A reading record of each student's progress in each reading skill should be made available to each student and parent.
   c. Students should keep own records of progress in each reading skill.
   d. A method of record keeping of student progress is developed by the staff using the scope and sequence of skill development determined by the district as the basis for the content of the progress record.
   e. Visible class records should be used with discretion.

4. Reading skills should permeate all areas of the curriculum.

   a. Content area teachers are in-serviced on the process of reading.
   b. All content area teachers are in-serviced as to how they can provide simultaneous teaching of reading skills and course content, the use of study guides, and the teaching of library and research skills.
   c. Teachers are in-serviced in the proper techniques of making assignments, establishing purposes for reading, providing background for reading, and asking questions that require students to use ideas rather than simply to remember them.
   d. Students receive self-help techniques during regular class time for improving their vocabularies.
   e. Provision is made to help students acquire necessary study skills for proper study of content materials.
   f. Students receive proper instruction in the technical vocabulary and the understanding of the content materials.
   g. Classrooms are equipped with a variety of levels of reading material dealing with the same content.

5. The total program should engender a reading habit which will lead to a productive and fulfilled life for the learner.

   a. Provision is made for the learner to read topics which interest him/her and to choose his/her own reading material.
   b. During instructional time the reading skills are taught through various media and presented in various ways to the learner so as to make reading instruction meaningful and exciting.
   c. The reading instruction meets the immediate needs of the learner so that he/she will think of reading as a way of meeting his/her future needs.

6. Any special program fulfilling the needs of the atypical child should be coordinated closely with existing classroom instruction.

   a. The remedial reading program is planned in coordination with the basic reading program of the school district.
   b. The classroom teacher and the student's special teachers meet frequently to discuss the needs and progress of the student.
   c. The student is not penalized in any way when he/she must receive instruction outside the classroom.
   d. Materials for instruction outside the classroom are different from the regular classroom instruction, but should serve the same identified needs of the student.
   e. Opportunities are given for the special teachers to work within the classroom as well as outside the classroom.

7. Instruction in reading should be provided in the language of the child whose dominant language is not English.

MATERIALS

1. The teacher should be encouraged to use a wide variety of commerical and non-commercial materials (basals, kits, newspapers, cookbooks, manuals, etc.) and equipment to meet the needs of the individual.

    a. Both the student's strengths and weaknesses are considered in selecting instructional materials.
    b. Sufficient funds are budgeted to purchase appropriate materials and equipment.
    c. Teachers and students are provided with various kinds of commercial materials to meet the identified needs of the program.
    d. Teachers are given in-service training on all new and unfamiliar teaching materials.
    e. The teacher is given released time by his/her school district to attend conferences to learn about new materials to help meet the needs of her pupils.
    f. Teachers and students have access to recorders, tape players, filmstrip projectors, etc.
    g. The reading specialist encourages teachers to try new materials in classrooms on an experimental basis.

2. The teacher should be encouraged to develop materials to meet specific needs of the learner.

    a. Teachers are given proper guidance from a specialist and given in-service training to develop effective material.
    b. Provision is made for resources and time to enable teachers to develop materials.
    c. Opportunities are provided for teachers to share ideas and directions for teacher-made materials.
    d. Teacher-made games and student-made games are good instructional devices and are developed for classroom use.
    e. Materials, equipment, and teacher-made materials are evaluated to determine effectiveness.

3. The library instructional materials center and/or resource room should be an integral part of the total reading program.

    a. Teachers are familiar with the materials and equipment available in the library and/or resource room.
    b. Time is provided during the school day for teachers to examine materials in the library and/or resource room.
    c. A knowledgeable staff assists the teachers in selecting materials and equipment.
    d. Teacher-made materials are also housed in the library and/or resource room.
    e. Children are encouraged to visit the library and/or resource room to help select materials and equipment.
    f. An effective cataloging system and shelving of materials assists the teacher and children in proper selection of non-print as well as print material.
    g. The librarian and the reading director have a working relationship in the ordering of a variety of materials necessary for the upgrading and complementing of the reading program.
    h. Teachers are encouraged to submit evaluations and recommendations for materials and equipment.
    i. The library schedule is flexible enough to accommodate individual needs of students and teachers.
    j. Library materials are provided in the languages of these students whose dominant language is not English.

ENVIRONMENT

Environment as defined here is the physical and psychological setting to which the learner is exposed during the time limits of the day.

1. The school district should provide adequate classroom physical facilities: space for large and small group instruction, individual study areas, adequate lighting, movable and multi-purpose furniture.

   a. All available space can be altered to provide for varied instruction, grouping patterns, or organizational arrangements.
   b. Movable partitions are provided for classroom flexibility.
   c. Noise being made by students busily engaged in a learning task is to be expected in a healthy classroom environment.
   d. Each instructional area has available space for individual study areas.
   e. Lighting is regulated according to the time of day, weather changes, etc.
   f. Each instructional area has available adequate electrical devices for use of audio-visual materials.

2. The instructional materials center and/or resource room should be centrally located and provide a wide variety of media and materials to meet the curricular and recreational reading needs of all students.

   a. The instructional materials center is easily accessible to all students and teachers.
   b. The instructional materials center is equipped with a wide variety of audio-visual equipment and materials that are appropriate for the reading program.
   c. A certified media specialist is responsible for planning and developing the district's media program.
   d. Through the instructional materials center various programs and activities are provided to encourage students reading.
   e. A collection of at least 10 books per pupil is available in the media center.

3. All facilities should be easily accessible, informal, attractive, and inviting..

   a. Adequate facilities are available for displays.
   b. The display area is well lighted.
   c. Furniture is colorful, movable, and properly maintained.
   d. Walls are bright, clean, and colorful.
   e. Floors are kept clean, some areas are carpeted for students to use as seating.

4. The classroom should reflect a healthy blend of organization and freedom.

   a. The classroom is kept neat and free from clutter.
   b. Students' storage areas are neatly kept.
   c. Materials and equipment are cared for properly so as to prevent needless damage.
   d. Certain areas of the classroom are designated for specific curricular areas.
   e. Furniture and equipment can be moved in order to provide for various grouping patterns.

5. Each school and classroom should project a warm personal atmosphere to promote a psychologically sound learning situation.

   a. There is mutual respect for the opinions of each other on the part of both teachers and students.
   b. Student work is displayed in various areas of the classroom and school.
   c. Classroom and school activities are planned to provide for the psychological needs of the school community as well as the educational and social needs.

6. The school should provide the learner with the opportunity to experience the world outside the school setting and to relate those experiences to the printed page.

   a. The school provides an ample budget for field trips for all students.
   b. Field trips are carefully planned so that they are meaningful and relevant to the learning experience of the student.
   c. Preparations for a field trip are carefully organized and upon the return from the trip, follow-up activities are provided and include a wide variety of experiences relating to reading and creative writing.

TIME

1. Although a daily uninterrupted period of time for reading instruction may be established, the applicable reading skills should be taught concurrently with content area instruction.

    a. The content area teacher incorporates the necessary reading skills required to understand each particular lesson in the daily instruction.
    b. The content area teachers are given opportunities to attend in-service meetings in reading in the content areas.
    c. Special help (Reading Specialist, Reading Supervisor) is available to assist the content area teachers in preparing and carrying out their lesson plans.
    d. Special material (hardware and software) is made available to content area teachers to use in teaching reading skills in the content areas.
    e. The importance of teaching reading skills in the content areas is stressed by the district's administrators.
    f. Through in-service and curriculum planning meetings, content area teachers are exposed to various reading skills inherent in different content areas.
    g. The curriculum guides in various content area subjects contain lists of reading skills necessary for each specialized content area.
    h. There is a variety of books on various reading levels related to different topics available for students to use in each content area within the classroom and resource center.

2. Teachers should be provided sufficient time free of students to evaluate continuously the needs and progress of each pupil and to formulate plans based on those findings.

    a. During the school day, special testing services and personnel are made available to all teachers so that a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in reading can be pin-pointed and an appropriate program can be planned in each content area.
    b. Time is made available for all teachers to meet in small groups to discuss the progress of their students.
    c. Time is made available for teachers to develop various checklists to use in evaluating student progress.
    d. Appropriate time is made available to teachers so that they can meet with the school guidance counselors and other professionals concerned with pupil evaluation.
    e. The teachers take time each week to cultivate the library habit and discuss good books discovered by the students.
    f. Student scores from a standardized reading test are made available to content area teachers, and a trained reading instructor assists the content area teachers in the interpretation and evaluation of these scores.

3. Adequate time should be allotted on a regular basis for free reading.

    a. At least one half-hour of each day should be devoted to silent reading on the part of the students and faculty.
    b. The school library is available to all students during the school day so that they may avail themselves of its material.
    c. Free reading is encouraged by permitting the students to read by themselves whenever they are finished with an assignment given by the teacher during any class period.

EVALUATION

1. Evaluation of the total reading program should be an on-going process and serve as a means of constant improvement.

   a. The school district conducts a district-wide evaluation of the reading program and uses the results of the evaluation to improve the program.
   b. Included in this district evaluation is a testing program of the mastery of reading skills.
   c. The evaluation of the reading program includes an attitude survey of students' attitudes toward the various components of the reading program.
   d. Surveys are conducted by the district to determine staff needs for the reading program.
   e. A self-study by the district's staff is conducted periodically to determine the needs of the reading program.

2. In addition to the commonly used norm referenced measures which have their limitations, student evaluation procedures should include a system of criterion referenced testing in order to determine mastery of a sequential arrangement of skills.

   a. Test results are used for diagnostic purposes in planning the instructional program for each pupil.
   b. Achievement test batteries are administered at least twice during grades 2-6.
   c. Individualized tests of mental ability are administered when necessary by qualified personnel.
   d. Criterion reference testing or its equivalent is available for determining mastery of reading skills.
   e. Test results are interpreted with the student's mental, social, and emotional growth in mind.
   f. The teacher keeps a dated folder of each child's work.
   g. Notebooks are used by the teacher which stress certain major areas of improvement and noting with dates, when each child seemed to master that particular area.
   h. A file of cards on each child is kept with notes on specific problems which arise.
   i. Children keep records of where they are in reading, what they have read, and a diary of things important to them.

3. In addition to administrative evaluation, each teacher should develop continous systematic self-evaluation procedures to direct and improve teaching performance.

   a. The reading teacher is given opportunities to evaluate his/her teaching performance through in-service activities, video-tapes of his/her teaching (to be used only as a self-evaluation procedure and not as a threat), and district paid subscriptions to various educational newsletters.
   b. The reading supervisor and principal conduct periodic formal and informal classroom observations followed by personal conferences with the teacher to relate strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations.
   c. A checklist of the characteristics of a good reading teacher is made available to the staff for self-evaluation.
   d. The reading supervisor and principal periodically demonstrate techniques for teaching.

BUDGET

Since reading is a priority, the reading program should determine the budget.

a. The budget allows for adequate staff for the reading program which should include classroom reading teachers, reading specialists, and a reading supervisor.

b. The budget includes monies for materials and equipment to adequately supply the needs of the reading program.

c. The budget includes monies for in-service education for the professional and non-professional staff and subscriptions to educational literature for the staff.

d. The budget includes monies for consultants/technical assistants to serve the needs of the reading program.

CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE IN READING

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1974

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The Evaluation Scale based on the Pennsylvania Right to Read Criteria for Excellence in Reading was developed by Mrs. Carolyn Markley, Greater Latrobe School District, with the assistance of members of the Pennsylvania Right to Read State Advisory Council; Mrs. Phyllis Humphreys, Derry Area School District; Miss JoAnne Radicchi, Right to Read Intern.

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Many people have supported the Twenty-Eighth Language Communications Conference by devoting time and energy to the development of this event. We would like to extend our thanks to these folks for helping us to make this a stimulating and profitable occasion.

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